

# **“Cobalt”**

**The Mascot of Cobalt  
Silver Camp  
And Other Stories**




*by* **Edward Spang**









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by

**EDWARD SPANG**

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*by*

EDWARD SPANG

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*To my daughter*  
MARIA JOHANNA

## NOTE

In laying this little book of short stories on Northern Ontario's literary tables, I sincerely hope that I have not offended anybody in their taste or personal point of view.

To carry the conception of "Cobalt"—the hero of my first story—clearly through, I was forced to interlace the points necessary to all stories, in logical sequence to one another and transfer the episodes of love and trouble to the animal kingdom.

In using this metaphorical method I relied upon ancient and even modern writers, and trust that I have not abused it.

Passing over the other three stories, a slight reference may be permitted to the few pages entitled: "A Contrast"; Historical Sketch. The facts related have truly been witnessed by the author himself.

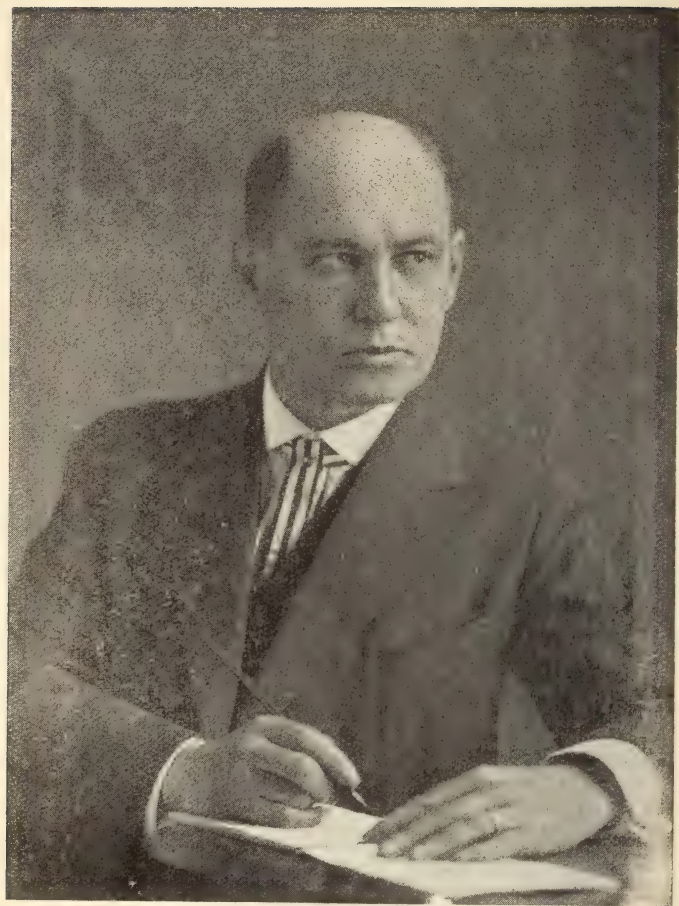
The author extends his thanks to Mr. Geo. E. Audebec of Sudbury, for valuable assistance rendered by him in revising this little work.

E. S.

Sudbury, Ont., Canada  
Sept.—Oct. 1921.







Edward Spang.

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## “COBALT”

### THE MASCOT OF COBALT SILVER CAMP

His name was Cobalt, and he was a dog.

Now, there is nothing particular in this, of being a dog, since all kind of different species exist; his mother and father were dogs, and let us presume, good dogs.

Cobalt was a marked dog from his very puppyhood. Born about the time of the discovery of the famous Cobalt Silver Camp, and being rather exceptional in appearance and demeanour, he soon enough attracted more than local attention.

A well known lawyer of Haileybury, Ontario, aspired to the right of being his owner; a point which everybody in Northern Ontario seemed in doubt of, including Cobalt himself.

Cobalt manifested from the days of his earliest youth a spirit of independence and hauteur which seemed to be bred and born in him. He simply refused anybody's claim to his existence, and while troubling nobody in particular for



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his support, also diverted his life to his own will and adventure. His favorite haunt was the pretty Vendome Hotel of Haileybury, where, resting before the open fire-place in the hotel-rotunda he could be found almost at any time; in winter or in summer.

He never seemed to be in a hurry; never ran or raced about like other dogs. He had a way to carry himself with dignity and exercised the utmost reserve.

Barking like other dogs seemed to him loathsome and undignified; at least he never did so for mere trifles. He never begged for his food. Somehow it seemed that his meals were served to him with care and at proper time.

But may this in no way suggest that he stood in well with Lee Chuck, the cook. By no means. Even this individual found no other recognition from him than perhaps a careless and half-suppressed little grunt: "it could be better."

Yet, who did not know Cobalt's peculiarities? His fame was the topic in mining circles and around the hotel fireplaces from Haileybury down to Toronto, and from Cobalt up the line to Elk Lake, Gowganda and Porcupine.

Cobalt knew every mining camp in the North, intimately, and was a not infrequent visitor here and there at times.

He would, if it suited his fancy, take leave of absence from the Vendome; follow the stream

## THE MASCOT OF COBALT SILVER CAMP

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of prospectors and turn up at any of their camps in the wilderness; enjoy their hospitality for a month or two and ultimately return home.

No magistrate in the country would have dared to treat him under the law as a vagrant stealing an occasional ride on train or steamboat. He enjoyed the freedom of both. Train-conductors and boat-captains alike would have thought it an ill omen had anybody ventured to dispute his right to this privilege. Any foreman of a far away mining camp was glad to suddenly perceive the well known face before his shanty-door, and extend to him the glad hand. It stood for good luck, and certainly spelled disaster, loss of the property's mineral vein, terrible bushfires, and what not, if otherwise construed.

One almost felt inclined to admit that this gentle canine was undoubtedly a shareholder in all the large mining ventures and financially interested in any of the public utilities.

Civically, he stood almost in the same social rank with the mayors of the different little towns; never missed such civic functions as the opening of the ice on Lake Temiscaming, and would never be absent from the dock, to welcome the first steamer—generally the Meteor—from Ville-Marie.

Tens of thousands were familiar with these facts, and the description of hundreds of incidents, connected with the life and adventures of this

## THE MASCOT OF COBALT SILVER CAMP

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charmed little brute, could hardly be attempted in full efficiency.

Cobalt's name stood for something unique in Northern Ontario's annals and his fame added lustre to the country far and wide. Yet, let us have two of his characteristics absolutely proclaimed: The picture of the great Empire Dog, ornamenting the National Emblem, accompanied by the words: "For what we have, we hold", must have visioned his mother when he was still an embryo; so much was his likeness to it. His fearlessness; his stubborn courage which tolerated no contradiction, were simply proverbial, and as records of history amply prove, could only relax with his removal from earthly existence.

He lived in an atmosphere of his own, where his wish and whim was law; and died honoured by humanity and the press.



## THE ROMANCE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

The years from 1907 to 1912 brought good times for Northern Ontario. To those times the following sketches relate:

Cobalt Silver camp's discovery and subsequent mining boom were followed by a series of larger and smaller spells of prosperity, spasmodically visiting and disappearing; but lasting as a whole and bringing in their train the further addition of other valuable mining fields, and terminating in the discovery of the Porcupine Goldfields.

Years as these generally carry a uniform aspect throughout the wide world. They vary very little from each other, because their stage setting is the same, and their actors never change.

When blacksmith La Rose's foot and shovel accidentally tumbled over a slab of solid silver, neither he nor anybody else surmised to a full extent the possibilities which might now follow in a continuous stream of events. These events to

## THE ROMANCE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

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be checked by nothing; held down by no obstacle, no danger, nor hardship.

For, he had found the very key which nature for hundred of thousands of years had hidden at the gates of this fabulous land of dreams and romance. This key, which in these forgotten or never known ages—to which even no guesswork could carry us back—was hidden here under great boulders, to be handed once more to the favorites of the Creator, indicating to them the true road leading through channels immense, to Nature's Treasure Trove.

Now, seeing more clearly, and linking logically one stitch with another, we venture to explain to ourselves the probable course of such an antediluvian progress.

Yet, less difficult it would be to follow such probable progress, would we but turn our mature mind back to the pages of youth; to the days which are filled with the keenest perceptions of childhood and with senses quivering in an abundance of poetry, derived from the tales of the Fairies.

Do we then stand by the gates of the playgrounds of such excentricities which populate the fair mind of children?

Look at Temagami, that beautiful wilderness dotted with uncountable lakes, large and small—ornamented by inlets romantic in the extreme—filled with fish to overflowing in their mysterious

## THE ROMANCE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

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waters. Look, gentle reader! See these giant cliffs crowned and covered by forests; arranged in perfect seramic order, which cast their shadows from one shore towards the other.

These must have been the garden-flats surrounding a vast estate; a romantic, mysterious province filled with treasures unheard of, and peopled with races non-existent today.

And where have they gone to? Is there no answer?

Was it reserved for man to come here one day and conquer? One out of one span of life; one out of another would they come; shaped by time for her purpose; graded by the mysterious action of atoms?

Yes, they would come, because mankind—God's Image—does not admit of a reach in its limits.

And it was ordained that La Rose's foot should tumble upon this first link which might well unravel it all. . . . .

The spade of La Rose unearthing the key from its bed of rock and mossy verdure, awoke the Country-side—which half sleepily looked from behind her curtained window's demanding:

What? Why did you disturb our cradle-sleep?

And that ring sounded clear, vibrating like silver bells in a blue, hued air.

Sweet! Unaccountably sweet!



## THE ROMANCE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

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Startled and filled with curiosity you said:

“Let’s see that key? What does it look like? What is its shape; its colour?”

Your wise men and your sages examined it closely; stroked their shaggy whiskers; whispered; looked at one another in perplexity and awe. Then consulted the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and many a parched document stored in museums and other places of trust, and said:

It’s Cobalt Bloom! The balm which age and time did use to preserve against the gnawing teeth of time!

“See these crevices filled with this purple-coloured greasy coating? Where this is found, there are the treasure-hoards of age, and ages past.”

“Dig, search! Search and dig!”

And you went to work with shovel, pick and dynamite.

The work of excavation soon began, and “Cobalt” was the name with which you christened the key.

The rest remains a flurry and a hurry for years.

The iron runners of commercial progress reached the Castle’s gate. The transformation from sleeping wilderness to feverish business-life was now often only a matter of days and hours. Little villages began to spring, like mushrooms, from the virgin forests.

## THE ROMANCE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

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The Deer, Moose, Bear and Jackal craned their necks and pointed their ears. What did possess the "White Man;" the "Ruler of the Earth!"—Did he come to drive them from their happy hunting grounds?

Let's be brief. Let us pass quickly over the memorable scenes of success and not rake on the rubbish heaps of despair.

It was a mad fight for success with many. It was a trying time for others. It was a rude awakening to hundreds of rash adventurers, and turned to a bed of roses for some who were the favorites of time.

Life is but short, but much will happen in its wake—mostly unrecorded and half forgotten in a little time.

But one link grips into another. When a chapter seems closed, we dip the quill; trace a few half-forgotten records together to a picture; name it history, lore, romance, just what you like. . . . .

Yet, life goes on until it reaches the borderland of time.

## HAILEYBURY, ONTARIO

Sursum corda.

All knew him well, "the Grand Old Man of Haileybury".

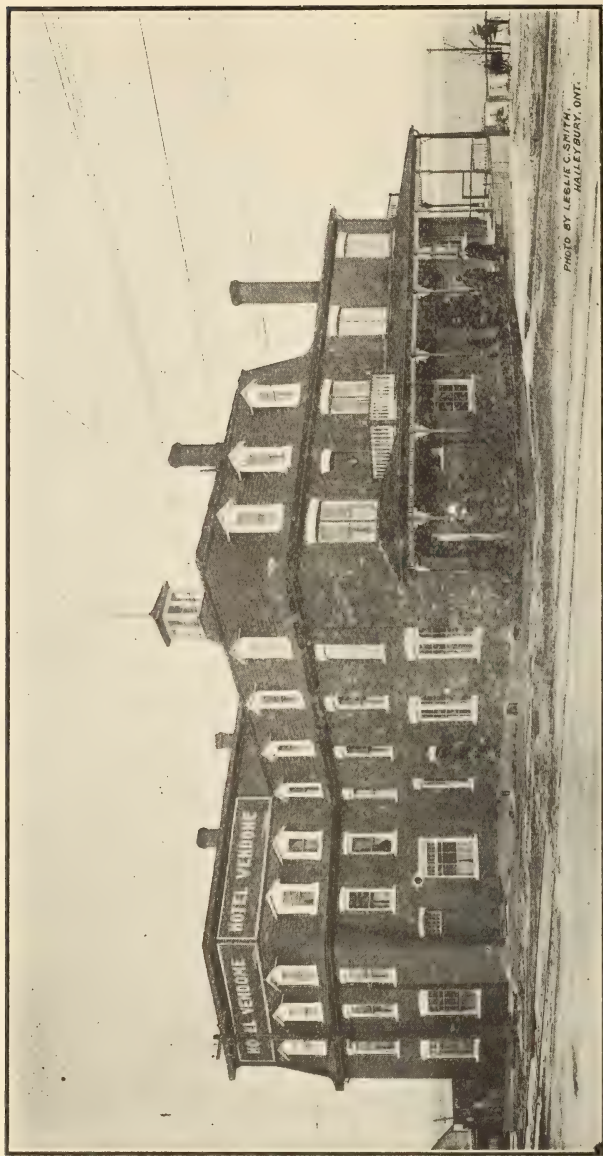
C. C. Farr could honestly boast of being the oldest settler in these northern wilds, having arrived here years ago when young and filled with the fire of travel and adventure. He then acted as a factor for the venerable Hudson Bay Company, of historic renown.

A lover of nature—so abundant in these northern wilds—he found here everything he had been dreaming of when young; but never had he forgotten his beloved country, far away over the great ocean expanse. Never had he for once ceased to remember his little English home, "Old Haileybury", the seat of learning which had given him all that he valued in life: Mother and Father; birthplace and schooldays.

O those schooldays of old Haileybury! What







The Vendome Hotel, Haileybury

## HAILEYBURY, ONTARIO

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wonders had they wrought in those days in the mind of this now aged man!

He was a born orator, with whom dispute was of no avail.

One would have had many reasons to wonder what ever made him acquire the strip of land along the lake Temiscaming. Had he a notion of its coming value?

He gave the place its name. His dream of life came true.

Haileybury, the playground of his youth, now Haileybury the residential suburb of Cobalt, gate to all the coming revelations of the future.

"His dream came true." He was content.

He was the father of the prettiest little town that eye could ever behold—if scenery counts at all. He gave to it its name; not Farr's Town, as others might have done. No, Haileybury he named it; the playground of his youth; the source of all his own accomplishments, in days now long ago.

O Haileybury!

Not knowing then, that one day—perhaps not even far away—here would stand his monument; a pillar on the right hand of the gate to Treasure Trove.

And there also lived in these days in Haileybury, a man adorned with the enviable name of

## HAILEYBURY, ONTARIO

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“Jack Damkins” who was the undisputable owner of “O’Smoke”, another dog, familiar to all the citizens of Haileybury.

Jack Damkins was a giant in appearance and a baby of good naturedness. He was poor when he settled in the north-land and he never changed in this respect, because he was free and generous.

He came from somewhere down the Ottawa Valley, with other ambitious men who began to explore the lands beset with the chain of waterways tributary to the majestic Ottawa River. They came not in search of precious minerals—such were then unknown to exist—but expectant to secure for themselves some of those enormous timber limits, expanding here in their virgin grandeur.

Here Jack Damkins remained, a friend to all who learned to know him; a true specimen of the race of people which he claimed his own, the “Habitant”, the hospitable people of the great River Valley, a mixture predominant of French descent, but intermixed through generations past with the blood of the industrious Scot and the admirable and light-hearted Irish.

O, how he rejoiced reciting the romances of his people in the days now dark and vague in age! He would tell how they conquered the wilds from the savage Indian tribes. How brilliant his eyes shone, and how his tremendous chest still further expanded when over his usual 11 a.m. at the



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Vendome, he found his audience listening to the noble deeds of his ancestors' heroic exploits.

Unselfish and generous he was to all; but still greater stood out these qualities in him which spelled advance; the tireless power which always drives ahead.

He was a builder by trade and a builder by moral force, and would find a genuine pleasure and pride in the rapid advance of his beloved home: Young Haileybury.

He built and built, through many months of the year, in ceaseless toil. But when the leaves in the bush began to fade and fall; when the call of the wilds began to vibrate through the fresh autumn air, he felt he had to follow the call—he, and his dog O'Smoke. Down to South Lorraine they went, into the mysterious wilds of romance, and here, where as guests in his hospitable log-cabin—somewhere near the "Narrows", we enjoyed his famous chicken (partridge) bouillon, yapping and smoking, while sitting around the dying embers of a camp-fire, we knew him as the real "Sage of Haileybury". And also did we know his satellite O'Smoke.

O'Smoke was a mixture of a Spaniel and a German Dachs. His hair was brown, his eyes were blue and looked intelligent. Being of civil disposition, he would never quarrel; neither would he bark. Like Cobalt, he was reserved, but in addition, very modest.

## HAILEYBURY, ONTARIO

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It must be stated that Cobalt was his friend; Cobalt the haughty the unapproachable "Mascot of the Camp".

## THE PROSPECTOR

Cobalt Camp was now firmly established and in the eyes of the world termed the greatest Silver Camp on Earth.

Discovered in 1903, it had, by 1907, lived through a period of storm and stress. It had its mines of value and renown—it had the others too—those which exist on paper only; endowed with glorious names resembling such as found on lists of old-time British Battle-Cruisers. Their values named on velvet paper, carefully arranged to please the eye, and signed and sealed. But alas! As far as values go, without the slightest claim to such; but known and forever memorable under the categorical description of “Wild Cats”.

Mildly, they were described as “Prospects” but on which the actual mining confined itself chiefly to that of a deluded “Public’s Pocket”.

Of course anybody wishing to get rich quick has, for good or bad, to take his chance, and must stand or fall by his conviction.

## THE PROSPECTOR

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And now the boom was over. The "Wild Cats" would soon be forgotten. The great producers went ahead in a way undreamt of, creating in their course of progress many a home of future power. But all the while, the hunters for "Treasure Trove" followed their work with a persistency and ardour which is the earmark of this trade.

And yet, how full of disappointments is the Prospector's life! The trail he follows is not even blazed. Compass and natural instinct are his only guide. His life is in his hands most all the time. He braves the hardships of which a bank clerk never dreamt. Trusting to his muscles, enduring marches through an underbrush, packed like a mule out in the blazing sun, tortured by thirst and flies, on—on and onward. He climbs from rock to valley, through swamps and muskeg where no roads exist; his eyes in search for the familiar indications of a mineral rock. His pick and shovel sound the shales.

"Perhaps, one day. Perhaps, who knows?"

Years thus flit by. He wanders and struggles through an underbrush in summer, and over glittering snowfields—snowshoed—in the winter, until one day, caused by a match carelessly thrown aside by one of his companions in the wilds, the conflagration is found racing on his heels. He is entrapped; he is engulfed by fire, smoke and tinder. His doom is sealed. His hopes and



## THE PROSPECTOR

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disappointments mingle with the ashes.

But let him escape these hardships. Let him appear again, on the doorsteps of civilization, pockmarked with sores on hand, arm and face; clouded in dust; clogged with the grime of the bush, and then mark well his steps:

“Bar, Bar,—for every glass a claim!”

And there he hangs on to the slippery counter railings afraid to let go, afraid his hold might slip; much like a shipwrecked sailor, that his frail support might vanish.

Yet, mother civilization understands: “Another “Fiz”, to drown all Hell’s privations”.

## GEORGE SPRUCE, "FACTOTUM"

"What may be your name?" he demanded. He had been ornamenting one of the comfortable leather-chairs in the rotunda of the Vendome Hotel, facing the clerk in his narrow office-square, for some time. It may be explained that said clerk happened to be a new addition to the hotel-staff.

One might have felt inclined to believe that he had his eyes rivetted on the hall-clock—so fixed had become his stare in this direction—but for the extraordinary height of the clerk, whose six feet and seven inches in stature half concealed this useful piece of office furniture from public observation.

"Well then, my friend," he repeated again, "what do they call you?"

The clerk looked up, a smile of amusement flitting over his handsome features. After a few moments he replied:

"They usually call me 'Big Harry'. My

## GEORGE SPRUCE, FACTOTUM

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name is Harry Bristow."

"Good! Think you'll stay here?"

"I hope so," answered Harry, "unless . . . . but who are you?"

"Now, that's great! haven't you found that out yet? Ask a man for his name, when he is known to every squirrel in Northern-Ontario! I am George, George Spruce, "Factotum", and here is my card."

The hotel clerk took the little piece of cardboard in his hand and studied it for a few moments. Turning to his questioner again he observed pleasantly:

"I am glad to make your acquaintance. Mr. Spruce, Factotum. A rather strange name—by halves—you know. What may be your vocation? Do you follow the mining game?"

"Don't mind telling you," said George. "I do, and again, I don't. I followed the prospecting game, yes, I have, and I quit it again. Really, it depends more on the other party, when you do it. On those willing to grubstake you. But at present, gee! believe me, it would be hard enough to-day to find anybody willing to buy you even a sandwich. No, no, my friend. I found it safer around here—for a while at least—to stick to a permanent job. I am the porter of this establishment; handy man, chore boy, shoe-black, any darned thing that is liable to help me to produce the almighty dollar in fractions. Of course—and

allow me to assure you—these eventualities were never fully foreseen in my youth, or it may be that my education would have followed stricter lines to suit such demands.”

“I realize this,” answered the clerk, struck by the humour of the situation. “You certainly succeeded, in a remarkable way, to abbreviate such an all-round description into an absolute minimum of alphabetical display. It’s really wonderful!”

“Calculating by the good English at your command—if I am not wrong—you have seen Oxford, or Cambridge, haven’t you?”

“To be sure,” answered George. “I lived at Oxford for some time, with an uncle of mine who conducted a butcher business there, to which I was duly apprenticed.”

“So, so;” mused the clerk. “You misunderstood.” But quickly realizing his indiscretion, he merely observed:

“O, I was just wondering!”

His curiosity now aroused, the clerk began to classify this caricature of misplaced humanity.

George Spruce was, what we might term, a man of middle age. Not exactly bulky in size, he fully looked the man used to a day’s hard work. His carriage was of a “dragging himself along habit”. Rather slow and not easily excitable, he preferred to take his time when struggling through his daily business-routine. He preferred



## GEORGE SPRUCE, FACTOTUM

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to perform a good job. Besides, why hurry in a mining camp? Who ever heard of such a thing?

In all his dealings with the patrons of the hotel, he used the greatest civility and naturally soon became a favorite with all; giving help willingly and advice in abundance on one hand, and collecting due tolls perpetually in quarter dollar size with the other.

Never was there a place more suitably filled by a man, and never was there a man more useful to be found for a place. All customers of the hotel were fully agreed on this point, and as George's pleasant manners made most of them overlook his humble station in life, he was often asked to join them in a drink, which he never refused, and a courtesy which he loved to reciprocate.

But human endurance as a rule—when confronted with such a severe test—will not last for very long. It will warn its careless victim time over time while branding it with the red-hot iron of vice. It will suck the life-blood of its victim, undermine all energy and make a wreck of a giant. The process, slow as it may be, surely and hopelessly leads to disaster.

"Poor George has his failings," was a common remark. "It's a pity!" But he was treated as before, and he treated back. He grew older but not richer; finishing each day loaded up to the brim, and awaking next morning, dizzy and

## GEORGE SPRUCE, FACTOTUM

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shaky, for another day's struggle. Should he care about clothes? His were worn out and shabby; smelling peculiarly. He had no sense left in him for better.

He sank deeper and deeper; yet was not aware of it. As a colossal reproach there only remained—much like a warning and so much like a mockery—his evenly balanced civility, framed in the adorable use of: “Correct English”.





PHOTO BY LESLIE G. SMITH  
"HILLYBURY" GAZ.

The Rotunda of the Vendôme Hotel



## OUTRAGE AND PUNISHMENT

"Ever take a drink, Mr. Harry? Come, it's my treat!"

As much as Harry tried to avoid the porter's familiar approach, he could not easily shake himself free from his newly made acquaintance. But an unexpected event happened to solve this dilemma.

A considerable crowd was, as usual, assembled before the fire-place in the rotunda. "Cobalt, the dog", the mascot of the camp, resting before the open grate, had just closed one of his eyes, (he always slept with one eye open) when Woodley, the snobbish bank-clerk, creeping near enough to him, got a firm hold of the stump of his tail, and with a savage jerk now dragged him along the floor to the centre of the rotunda.

Turning around himself, he began to swing Cobalt bodily in circles through the air, giving the scene the appearance of a merry-go-round in motion.

## OUTRAGE AND PUNISHMENT

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Cobalt and Woodley had never been on good terms. The latter had something in his approach which was a hindrance to confidence. He practised the abnoxious habit to always "butt in" when not wanted, and it was whispered along that he could not be trusted.

His hair, cropped like a convict's, was red, fire-red, and his skin full of freckles. Thus stood he in life, a complete case of a trick in which nature had taken every precaution.

But, should there be really a cause for alarm in others more fortunate?

Quite apart from the indignity which such a circus-stunt—this merry-go-round trip—was to produce, there was added to it, the sensation of pain so suddenly experienced by this outrageous attack, and now giving vent in a howl which shook every globe in its socket.

George looked for a moment. His sinews—where they held neck and head in position—contracted, and stood out like base-balls.

And now he held the centre of the rotunda.

"Let go, you idler!" he thundered. "What, you defy me!"

His arms reached out like in the days of Oxford, bent to draw blood. Murder was glittering in his eyes.

Poor Woodley choked and lost his grip on Cobalt's tail. The startled audience drew their breath; George Spruce was doing something new.

## OUTRAGE AND PUNISHMENT

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Cobalt, now fully aroused by this time had slipped towards George. It was an instinct, worlds old, which guided him; the instinct, which suggests alliances. His eyes bulged out defiant. His teeth kept up a nervous motion easily compared with such convulsions and distortions of a human face, engaged in chewing gum.

"Apologize! Come on, be quick!"

"Apologize to Cobalt!" thundered Spruce.

The clerk looked on stupidly and grinned. "Apologize? And to a dog?" he said, "who ever heard of such a thing?"

"You did," said George; "and look—my boy—I mean it; mean every word of it."

"Now then, will you?"

"No," said Woodley. "You better come and brush my boots, for I see you're short of work."

"I'm short of patience!" quivered Spruce. "Just once more: Apologize!"

Woodley looked nervously around, much like a cornered rat. He felt uncomfortable.

The audience drew the ring complete.

George deliberately rolled his shirt-sleeves to the armpits, exposing biceps which attracted due attention; took off his leather belt, extending his right leg a little inclined by the kneecap and thus forming a support. Then encircling Woodley's waist with vice-like power, he drew him gently to this place of rest.

Zish! The leather cut the air and landed at

## OUTRAGE AND PUNISHMENT

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a place which has an historical claim on age old methods of punishment. Nobody interfered. George counted: "twenty-one!"

Woodley collapsed. . . .

"Now then," said Spruce, "stand straight. Feel like revenge? Here, you can have it! Yes, have it punched out of us." He folded his arms and turning to the hotel clerk fairly rang out the command:

"Write him out a "meal-ticket", Harry, and charge it to my account!" \*

"This is the first time I've ever seen George losing his temper," said one of the hotel guests; "but the fellow deserved his punishment."

Woodley was never again seen at the Vendome Hotel.

\* A meal ticket holds 21 punches for an equal number of meals.

## AN ALLIANCE

During the remainder of the day, George was seen heading for the bar oftener than usual; emerging every new time more and more strained in discreet relation to himself, until human endurance drew the limitation line. A couple of helping arms lent willing assistance, to see him safely to his bedroom.

"What a pity!" said Mr. Hill to Harry the clerk.

"Indeed, a great pity," answered Harry. "And still this poor boy has a heart as large as a mining claim; as rich as all the gold in its depths."

"Perhaps, one day, someone will touch the secret springs," reflected Mr. Hill, "and turn its valuable contents ot proper advantage."

It takes time; but the human system's mechanical action will always strive to free itself from the stupor which hold body and mind in the terrible bondage of drink and sin. It will strive hard to regain the level from which it slipped.



## AN ALLIANCE

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Life is sin. Laid out for permanent sinful actions, trivial and great.

When dawn of morning began to creep over the window panes, George, usually an early riser, groped about himself.

Where was he? How did he come to be there?

"O, yes!" he guessed; "a little more than usual last night, and then forgetfulness and sleep."

He stretched his benumbed limbs. While letting his arm roll over to one side his hand was touched by something soft. At first he fancied to be dreaming, but as this caress continued, doubt and curiosity led him to investigate this strange phenomenon. So used to be alone, this fact had irritated him. Turning over to this side, he now beheld the dog, Cobalt, licking his hand.

"Cobalt!"

A suppressed little grunt came like an answer from the dog.

"You here, my little fellow?" queried George. "How did you come to follow me?"

George was now sober; only stiff and tired. He looked at Cobalt for some time, in thoughtful silence; looked into his upturned eyes, so full of gentle expression and unspeakable intelligence. He forced his wandering mind to concentrate on all the strange events of yesterday, and guessed the reason why.—How could it be otherwise?

## AN ALLIANCE

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The dog was showing to him his gratefulness—this was evident. The only living creature on this earth who did not loath his presence.

“Cobalt!” he said again, “I understand.”

“Listen to me, my dog. Listen to what I say to you. I know you cannot speak—words of tongue were not given to you—but your intelligent eyes, your ways and actions, long convinced me that you fully understand what’s going on around you. How you must wonder when you see this strangely acting crowd of mankind condescending to favor you with its opinion, its applause, its praise and fun? I would give the little finger of my hand, could I but know!”

And Cobalt looked in George’s face.

“Cobalt,” said George again, “there must be an understanding between us. You cannot speak, but you do hear. Answer me thus: When “Yes”, grunt in assent; when “No”, then open wide your mouth. Let’s see! Do you understand?”

And Cobalt grunted assent.

“What brought you here, my Cobalt?” queried George. “Was it your feeling of gratitude, in answer to the paltry turn I did for you? If so, allow me to express to you my most sincerest thanks. Am I right?”

Cobalt grunted assent.

George looked in wonderment. “You understand!” he mused. “Why did I never think of

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this before? The trick is just so simple. Say, what a world of fun it opens for us!"

"Exactly," grunted Cobalt.

Being precise in all his actions, he now proved to be in his affirmative remarks.

"Now," said George, "that I know your sentiments, my Cobalt, let's have it settled once for all. I propose an alliance between us; a co-operative agreement. A kind of friendly understanding to help one another; because, my friend, this world is bad. O! it is so bad; so full of hypocrisy and selfishness, that few are the chances open for the honest people. What say you, Cobalt?"

Cobalt hung his head for a while thoughtfully and hesitatingly grunted in reply.

"I understand; fully understand what you wish to say," said George, who studied Cobalt almost minutely. "And so stupid," further added George. "That's what you wish to say."

"Yes," grunted Cobalt, almost delighted to be so readily understood—which could easily be detected by the nervous movements at the corners of his mouth.

"All right! boy," said George. "You protect me, and I will do the same for you. I can handle a few of them at a time, as much as brutal strength may go; but I feel helpless when up against their tricks. O, their hypocrisy!"

"But, mark it well, my Cobalt, we'll have

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them!"

"Nobody will suspect you. You will be the silent observer in the future; the "Spotter", as they name it, and I will be the actor. This mining game is mainly a game of bluff. The one who knows comes first. The insider always wins; the other loses. The rich grow richer while the poor eat grass. Do you understand?"

Cobalt grunted assent.

"And then," said George, "when we have once succeeded in this game, we'll play up. I'll build a house for us down by the lake, and we will live like kings. No more tramping for you, my boy, and no more chore-boy work for me. We will do some travelling too. I'll show you London, England. Well, is it a bet?"

But Cobalt opened wide his mouth; wide—wide.

"Ah!" wondered George, "this proposition does not appeal to you."

Cobalt kept his chops wide open.

"I see," said George; "you are what we term, "domesticated"; don't care to leave the soil."

And Cobalt grunted assent.

"Well, well!" followed George, "this is strange indeed; still I do not blame you."

"Cobalt" seemed to pay no further attention to George's plans for the future. He extended his fore legs, and raising himself to the window-sill allowed his vision to absorb the dawn of day.

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"Be it so," he acknowledged. "Let's go!"

"It's morning; let's see what's doing in the bar."

One point they had in common with one another: they never dressed. And so began another day for George; the past only divided and marked from the present by the fact that an alliance had been formed which would be lasting.



## GEORGE SPRUCE'S CONFESSION

"Upon my word you are a strange actor, Mr. Spruce," said Harry, the clerk, when finding George punctually next morning at his work; "you are!"

"Sure, sure," answered George. "This life is a circus; did not Shakespeare say so?"

Harry looked dismayed at this wreck of humanity before him.

"Why . . . . why man! In the name of Rum and Gin, give it up!"

"You kill yourself. Have you no regard for yourself; for mother, father or sweetheart?"

"No," answered George, laconically. "And if I do kill myself, what about it?"

"Life is but a journey to the grave, and if I choose one of the shortest roads towards it, is it unreasonable that I try this one? But you are right Mr. Harry, and what's more, you are very kind to me; yet, I receive kindness from you, undeserved. Please, do not waste your sympathies

## GEORGE SPRUCE'S CONFESSION

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on me, it's futile."

"What reasons do you offer, explaining such suicidal intentions, George? There must be something on your mind to cloud it so; there must be something over your heart, that broke it?"

George was used to personal reproach. Indeed, he had more friends amongst those weather-beaten men than he liked to admit; but Harry's words seemed to strike a new cord in him. It was an appeal to the dearest and nearest on earth. Nobody had ever spoken to him like this before. His fingers shuffled the pages of the worn-out hotel-register in a trembling, nervous way. He looked at Harry; looked him full in the face, and there glittered those tears on his eye-lashes often taken for an object of cold or cough; but for those in search of emotion, to the keen observer of human nature, they have only one meaning. They speak loud, loud, a language of their own. And Harry understood.

"Tell me, George," he said simply, "perhaps I might be able to help you. Who knows? Haven't we all our troubles? A couple of hearts will carry them easier than one. Come, brother George, what's wrong? I do not ask you for curiosity's sake, be sure of it!"

There was nobody around the hotel hall, while the two men seated themselves in the leather-chairs by the wall. Cobalt alone held his

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early siesta—one eye open—before the fire-place.

There was silence for a while.

George was apparently struggling with himself. Should he, or should he not? Should he accept this kind strangers sympathy? What was the use of it? He could not help him. It simply placed the dagger, pricking the old wound again. Still, what harm could it do? No harm; the scales stood even.

"I will tell you, Mr. Harry, if you listen; it's an odd tale, in fact—the same old tale!"

"About some girl then," Harry inferred; "well, tell me all. The bulk of manhood is struggling around this pole. Do you claim exception from the rule?"

"I do not," answered George, "but look at the sad results."

"It may be so," said Harry, "if you allow perfectly logical circumstances in life to influence you. What could you change, or hope to change, by doing so? Do you believe that you could stop the progress of happenings ordained? It's a woman, then?"

"Yes," said George; "it is a woman. It is a woman, that is responsible for my sojourn in this country; for my life, as it is to-day; for all this misery. It is a woman, sure, as you say, Mr. Harry!"

"Tell me all," commanded Harry. "Your case may be perfectly simple; might offer no

## GEORGE SPRUCE'S CONFESSION

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unreasonable difficulties. I have seen people survive victorious, which once despaired like you."

George told him the story of his life; unimpassioned, from start to finish. He relieved himself now of his terrible burden, and shaking Harry's hand, simply closed:

"And now, you know all, Mr. Harry—all!" And then he trotted to the "bar".

"Well, I'll be darned!" reflected Harry; "if that is not the same old story; the same and tiresome old thing: A man who loves a girl, and a girl not quite decided if he is the right one. This happens every day. No variation from the usual rules. Even the general strange point to it, the one peculiar to all stories. He loves her, saves her life by chance, once from the flaming crumbling debris. In doing so, he finds his attention drawn to one peculiar incident. There is a peculiar incident to all stories: (the revolving point; the absorbing point, to catch the human interest.) For instance in this case: The house burns down; the girl's life is saved. But the tune from the record of the Gramophone, still playing as he heard it then; the tune of: "Home Sweet Home", is still wandering through his memory."

## DADDY EATON'S ANNIVERSARY

"Harry," whispered Daddy Eaton, with an expression of apparent anxiety, "watch that cigar-case!"

Harry promised to do so.

This was Daddy Eaton's (the proprietor of the Vendome Hotel) anniversary, which falling on October 31st, 1909, he decided to celebrate, in a way befitting such an event. He held the reins of the establishment now for the last four years—to be exact to the day. During this time he had grown a little older—not very much—but considerably richer. He was well liked by everybody, and had gained the goodwill of his guests through his evenly balanced temperament, and thereby managed to enjoy the good opinion and satisfaction of all who came to his hospitable home.

His liquor brands were standard; the meals satisfactory, and the rooms—as far as temperature goes—corresponded with the outside world



## DADDY EATON'S ANNIVERSARY

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as near as possible, in winter as in summer. Not that he particularly tried to save in coal or wood; it simply came about for reasons beyond his control, depending on the way the house was laid out. There were only a few radiators in existence—four, we believe—envying, in their domestic function, the open fire-place in the rotunda. They seemed to be placed around the hotel like the stake-poles of a newly discovered mining claim, with the fire-place for a discovery post in the middle, simply to indicate the good intentions of the architect. The dining-room received sufficient heat from the kitchen, and nobody expected the bar to be endowed with such a luxury as heat, which might have, at times, tended to be taken for a discomfort, considering the potential qualities of all the goods here sold.

One might have felt the cold when coming in, but nobody was ever heard to complain about the weather, when coming out.

Yet, considering everything, there existed enough of comfort for everybody, and nobody found reasons to complain. A few years had done wonders in construction work all around, and all felt justly satisfied and open to congratulations with themselves, if only one bush-fire a year annihilated that which the previous year's labor had created. Money was there in abundance and simply had to be spent. A man approaching old age could never have found a

## DADDY EATON'S ANNIVERSARY

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more suitable occupation as the one which Daddy Eaton now held. He could be sure to wind up the evening of his life with success. Such were hotel-conditions those days. Of course, and not to create a wrong impression upon the people's mind of our days, it must be said that these conditions have given place to all kinds of modern improvements, which follow the stream of civilization's progress.

. . . . Every light in the hotel was ablaze. The invited guests for the celebration began to assemble in the hotel-rotunda. And when later on seated in the dining-room; when satisfaction began to run high; when speeches flowed to match with a continuous flow of all kind of liquors, beers and wines, even Daddy Eaton exhibited signs of satisfaction. He certainly felt elevated. He stroked his grey chin-beard—an attitude of his expressing the utmost amount of self-satisfaction, to which it added an appearance of great thoughtfulness.

Many a toast had thus far been launched in his honor. Now he rose for an answer.

Undoubtedly, this was the critical and supreme moment of his life. He shifted his pince-nez to the top of his nose and thus giving his vision more playground, looked around. He found his objective: Harry.

## DADDY EATON'S ANNIVERSARY

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"Harry," he said, "watch that cigar-case."

"I wonder what Daddy is going to say to us," said Mr. Hill to Judge Elliott, his neighbor; "he never spoke before."

"I bet you my bottom dollar," answered Judge Elliott, "the old man will give us the surprise of our lives to-night. Silent waters are deep! Ha! ha! ha! ha!" and his cane came crashingly in contact with the floor.

And there stood Daddy Eaton, erect, and facing a crowd of intimate friends. Once more he lifted his pince-nez from its resting-place, then took his handkerchief and carefully began to clean the glasses. He positively looked a master of the situation. Once more he beckoned to his satellite Harry, who dutifully approached him, to be presented with the same old reminder: "Watch that cigar-case Harry!"

"Yes, yes," said Harry, "I'll watch it; don't worry. Say something now; they are waiting."

Daddy Eaton now fully faced the crowd and began:

"Gentlemen, Friends of mine, Travellers, Adventurers and Prospectors! I wish to speak to you!"

An uproar followed now. . . .

"You heard," said Weldy Young to Hill, sitting by his side, "you heard? That's really classic!"

"I expected it," now answered Mr. Hill.

## DADDY EATON'S ANNIVERSARY

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"Great talents are just born."

"Gentlemen! . . . . It is a great pleasure for me to see you here to-night," began Daddy Eaton. "It is indeed a very great pleasure for me, to see you here to-night, and . . . . and . . . . , I must say, again. . . . I must say that I am so glad to see you here to-night!"

"Hear, hear!" shouted someone in the crowd. "Keep it up, Daddy, keep it up!"

"I only wish that I could see you here like this on every night. I'm sure I mean it."

"No doubt he does," said Mr. Hill to Weldy Young.

Daddy Eaton was now evidently clearly embarrassed. He had never very much to say at the best. His conversation, always a limited one, now clearly lacked the forceful impetus to drag itself over the rapids.

"I'm sure I'm glad to see you all here to-night," he ventured just once more. And then he sat down. . . . .

Once more he rose. Detecting Harry, quite near him, he said again: "Harry, watch that cigar-case!"

This was the signal for a tumult; an uproar never heard through these halls before, and under the protection of the familiar strains of: "For, he's a jolly good fellow" . . . . etc., he sank into his chair—and out of sight.

Anybody familiar with those days could find

## DADDY EATON'S ANNIVERSARY

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all he wanted in the columns of the "Cobalt Daily Nugget" and "The Haileyburian", to convince himself of what Daddy Eaton really intended to say.



## O'SMOKE CONSULTS COBALT

We know our happy go lucky crowd of people in a mining camp now. We know how they live and act; eat and drink. Make money, lose it and make it again. They never care for to-morrow, because to-morrow is another day which will take care of itself.

Why worry?

Transparent in its effervescence, this happy spirit will reflect on anything it comes in contact with. The brilliancy of this life is comet-like. It comes and goes, and in the radiance of its hue, die: hardship and terror. Always hopeful, it sweeps on and on, along the corridors of our earthly heavens. Strong as radium-power acts its reflex communicating to the very beast.

About 11 a.m. one nice morning in November month, O'Smoke came sneaking along to the fire-place in the rotunda of the Vendome, where Cobalt rested.

As Jack Damkins, his master, was giving his

usual lecture in the bar-room, the fact of being absent from him would remain unnoticed.

Dog is Dog. Whether Bulldog, Dachs or Spaniel, Irish Terrier, Russian Silver-Spitz or French Poodle, or whatever they may be, they do not make much fuss. They like one another, or they hate one another. They either kiss, or growl and bite. National descent apparently plays no barrier.

About the end of August there had arrived at the village of Haileybury, a family from old France, bringing with them a beautiful looking French Poodle of the female sex.

O'Smoke seeing her, had fallen in love almost at first sight. But who could help that?

Beauty is rare, and when we find it, then we stand and stare and try to make advances. So did O'Smoke.

Snow-white she was, this pretty little girl, and carefully groomed. A pretty ribbon of the colours of the "Tri-colore" adorned her neck. Her eyes—a sparkling mixture of Bordeaux and of Moselle—reflected a soft subdued red and green. In fact, she was bewitching!

O'Smoke, when he had seen her first, lost not a minute's time; but finding out her name and address, he bade her welcome to the city of his master.

Not this alone; but he craved permission to again present himself, rub noses, roam together

## O'SMOKE CONSULTS COBALT

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through the underbrush in search of beetles, hares and squirrels and the famous porcupine—the latter, which he alone could claim to absolutely master in its narrow haunts.

Ophelia—this was her name—felt greatly interested; promised him a date, and from this day a change had taken place in O'Smoke.

And so it came about, that O'Smoke had fallen in love all over his ears—long as they were.

Just fancy, O'Smoke in love!

But so it was; we have the facts for which we are indebted to George Spruce, for he and Cobalt had no secrets between themselves.

And so the story started—full of interest—life and love and passion; doubts and agony and hopeful moments.

O'Smoke had never loved before.

"Well," said Cobalt, "what do you mean to do?"

"Get married," answered O'Smoke.

"Well, go to it," Cobalt suggested. "Go to it!"

O'Smoke sat down in front of Cobalt, by the fire-place. He slowly lifted his right hind-leg and began to scratch his ear.

"Go to it!" he said, "yes, as if it was so easy. A dog like me takes such affairs with all due seriousness."

"Of course," said Cobalt, "this is understood. But, what do you propose to do? There's one

## O'SMOKE CONSULTS COBALT

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good point about us dogs: we do not care to make much fuss."

"That's right," admitted O'Smoke.

"Well, then," spoke up Cobalt, "as I said before, go to it. I'll be your witness when it comes to that."

"Thank you," answered O'Smoke. "There's just one point which makes me feel uneasy. You know, I rather love my home. In fact I have one which many another dog would like to name his own. My master is good and generous; you know that well. If we could bring the trick about that he might take a fancy to the foreign lady and buy her—gee! if that could be accomplished, I would die of pleasure."

"I'll try! I'll see what I can do," said Cobalt. "I will speak to George. Meantime, keep the matter dark."

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE SPRUCE

"Something has to be done for George," said Harry the clerk, to Daddy Eaton," and pretty soon too. After all, we are to blame, and I fear he cannot last, at the present rate, very much longer."

"Would not a change of surroundings be helpful to him?"

"It may," thoughtfully observed Daddy Eaton, "it all depends."

"If we could place him in one of those locations where a little supervision on his behalf could be exercised—where liquor is scarce. at least—maybe it would help him. Have you anything to suggest, Harry?"

"How then would South-Lorraine do?" asked Harry, going straight to the point. "You have friends of your family there. I'm sure, they would help us out."

Daddy thought for a while—he never hurried in anything.



## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE SPRUCE

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"You are right," he said at last. "I'll speak to them." And in due time George was shipped to South-Lorraine.

It was no easy matter to convince him to the good intentions his superiors claimed; but he yielded at last and resigned to his fate. He took farewell from Cobalt as one would from a human friend. It would be a separation probably for a month or two; and after all, the best of friends must part sometimes.

The Meteor brought him safely over to the famous mine in South-Lorraine, where his vacation was to be given him.

The journey over lake Temiscaming did him good and he arrived there in good spirits as well as fairly sober. All would have been well had not a constant coming and going of people from town to mine brought with itself the unavoidable consequences. People going to these places are generally amply provided with the goods—as the technical term goes—and it would have been a thing next to impossible to conceal such facts from George. Obliging as his disposition was—a second nature so to say—he soon began to make himself useful at the mine. He met the steamer every day and directed and guided visitors and workmen to and from the mine. His attention always found its rewards and thus the change of climate could not do much for him. His spirit too, depressed by

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE SPRUCE

feelings of loneliness, sagged lower and lower. He watched the pier at South-Lorraine—a second Robinson Crousoe—every day; watched for the Meteor's arrival and for: "his supply of fire-water."

And so passed many days. Then, one day, George Spruce was missing.

The Meteor brought the news to Haileybury. George Spruce was absent from the mine; could not be found. Bad news travels just as quick as good news. The mysterious disappearance of George was over and over discussed around the fire-place at the Vendome.

"Strange!" said Harry to Daddy. "What could have happened to him?"

"I feared as much", answered Daddy "I really did. He cannot leave the cork alone; there you are!"

"Yes," interlocuted Weldy Young. "He did his bit during his apprenticeship in our camp. He must have swallowed enough of them to keep him floating from South Lorraine to North-Temiscaming.

"Think that's where he is?" asked Jack Hammil—well known along this route. "Well, if he should turn up there, I'll see that he is buried with all the civic honours due him."

"O, don't joke like this!" here interrupted Hackett. (Mike Hackett always was a friend to George.)

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE SPRUCE

"Something should be done; and done at once," he added.

"I'll tell you what!" flushed in Ernie Holland, "I'll tell you what. Let's organize a search-party right now, that would start in the morning. Let's charter the Meteor. That will give us the joke of the season and serve the purpose. A picnic like this, with the underlying object of unmistakable christian-like feeling attached, is at once, noble and . . . well, George has to be found."

"Has to be found!" echoed some together. "Dead or alive!"

The Meteor arriving at 1 p.m. next day, at South-Lorraine, had everybody on board who claimed a name in Haileybury, with the exception perhaps of the members of the Haileybury Brass-Band (also making up the local fire-brigade) which could not be requisitioned for fear—as Bandmaster McGillivary reasonably explained—that in their absence, a fire starting might be disastrous to the town. It had been suggested, as we know, but dismissed and very much regretted.

"Besides," as said McGillivary, "most of the boys know Chopin's and Mendelsohn's funeral-marches only by name, and the music therefor could never be procured in such a hurry."

"Never mind," said Eddy Holland, "we have Leo Ehrenhous with us. He plays the mouth-organ as good as a full fledged brass-band."

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE SPRUCE

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Therewith the matter dropped.

"Who knows? George might be still alive; astray somewhere in the woods," suggested another; "the woods will have to be searched."

A caravan in King Solomon's time could hardly have consisted of more baggage in all kind. It reached the mine in safety nevertheless, just occasionally leaving an empty whiskey-case by the road-side, as the bleaching bones of a Dromedary, fallen and abandoned somewhere in the desert, mark the climax to a tragedy.

Of course, Cobalt was a member of the party; uninvited, but all there.

Ahead of all, he took the lead. He was alarmed, but instinct and devotion guided him. And, when after long palavering, a definite plan had been evolved; he took the lead.

He had already found the scent of George. He took the party down, straight down, unerringly, into some valley. Then up some hills. Then stopped and sniffed the air. Pointing his ears, he now began to run, run, run, straight to a little plateau to the left. There, George Spruce was found.

He was alive. He could be seen high up, and clinging to the upper branches of a fir tree; his eyes fixed much like a fire-fighter's when in action. There he stood talking and singing, as if addressing someone near him:

"Quick! quick! the house is on fire. Come

## THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGE SPRUCE

down, come to the window, quick! I'm here, George Spruce, to help and save you."

And then he sang as he heard it once, in that sweet melody on the gramophone: "Home, home, sweet home!"

George was in the . . . . and now fancied to be living in the past.

"Mind, be careful!" said Harry, "I know his troubles; it's quite natural. Mind he does not fall!"

"He's walking in his sleep," said Eddy Holland. "You, Harry, stand by and lend us your legs."

"No," fell in Hammil, "wait; let's mix a fiz and take it up to him, it'll sober him!"

Thus was George Bruce rescued. And the Meteor, arriving late that evening in Haileybury, bringing him back to civilization, had a reception which would be difficult to find rivalled in ancient or in modern history.



## RE-UNITED

"My life belongs to you," said George to Cobalt.

Cobalt grunted assent, and being no friend of many words, the matter dropped.

"You are a pickle," said Harry, when finding George on the job next morning. "Upon my word you are!"

"Sure, sure;" answered George. And the strange episode was therewith dismissed.

## THE ENGAGEMENT OF O'SMOKE

"I want you to do me a favor, George," explained Cobalt to George later on in the day. "It concerns O'Smoke."

Constant companionship of man and dog began to ease the difficulties in their peculiar relation to one another. Somehow, George was able to discern the slightest notions of his canine friend, and what he did not fully understand he fairly guessed.

"As a matter of fact," explained Cobalt to George; when telling him about O'Smoke's "*affaires d'amour*", "I do not like the idea of getting mixed up in others private affairs; but something should be done for O'Smoke. I promised him."

"And you will not have to break your word, my boy. I'll fix it up. I, George Spruce, "*Factotum*"!"

Cobalt grunted. The reply had made him happy.

## THE ENGAGEMENT OF O'SMOKE

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"Just let me think this affair over for a few days. Surely, there must be a way to accommodate the parties," continued George.

And he kept his word.

"When will we attend the next meeting at the island, Damkins?" demanded Spruce of the habitant one day, when he was taking in his usual 11 a.m.

"Wait a moment! wait a moment!" answered Jack Damkins.

"The moon will stand at full next Wednesday; that will be the time."

"Will you come George?"

"I will. Indeed I will! I have to offer incense at the shrine, you know," answered George.

"Yes," grunted Damkins;" for your safe delivery from the woods; from an awful death. I'm glad you recognize the ancient laws."

"What—O!" said George. "I am a decent heathen, and I hope to die one."

. . . . "The Northern Light" was ready the next Wednesday to take the party to the place of mystery. For some time rumors had it in Haileybury that something was going on there; but none could tell for certain. The ones to know had sworn allegiance to the order, and sealed the pact in blood; and even now to this day it's only a nebulous surmise on our part—what really

## THE ENGAGEMENT OF O'SMOKE

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happened over there; on Farr's island.

The Northern Light was grinding the sand under her kiel. The water splashed gently on her sides. The moon stood high and full in the heavens. The evening was slightly frosty.

It was now the end of November.

Jack Damkins stood by the helm, ready to crank the engine. Cobalt and O'Smoke were on the bridge, and George had just arrived alongside, with a pack-sack on his back. Then they started. "On time," said George. The town clock just struck "eight".

The distance not being great between the mainland and the island, they soon arrived.

"George!" whispered Cobalt, "George! did you see? Look back! look back!"

And there, in a strange, fantastic silhouette, there on the shore, just left by the Northern Light, stood a dog,—a great and savage looking dog; barking very loudly.

"What's that?" asked George.

"It's Prospector Munro's 'Loafer'", said Cobalt. "He too is in love with Miss Ophelia. He smelled a rat; be on your guard!"

.... "And now, reveal yourselves to us, shadows of the departed! We come to worship by the shrine!" croaked Damkins.

In deep silence they travelled for some minutes; O'Smoke and Cobalt leading, Damkins and George just following, until they reached the

## THE ENGAGEMENT OF O'SMOKE

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grove. A clump of trees stood there, all high and dry. Their leaves lay mostly scattered on the ground; their bare branches pointing, like invoking hands, up to the heavens above. They looked like sentinels.

A block, a solid piece of rock, much like an altar, stood there, surrounded by a number of smaller stones which might have served for benches inviting rest and hospitality.

Damkins stopped and raised his hands.

George stopped and dropped his packsack.

O'Smoke and Cobalt approached, sniffed at the packsack, and expressed a sign of satisfaction.

Damkins harangued the heavens and the night in words so strange! Yet George seemed used to it; he never interrupted for a single time.

"Along then! George," said Damkins, pointing to a high square slab of rock, apparently intending to remove it. "Here, lend a hand."

"Not yet," responded George, still holding the packsack. "First this." And loosening the straps he now produced "Ophelia", the pretty little poodle-girl, O'Smoke's fiancée.

Then he explained how he abducted her from her French owners. "I promise Cobalt to assist him," he said; "swore to him by the name of our ancient tribe. I have to help him now. Soon our brethren from the other shore will be with us. Look! do you not recognize the light

## THE ENGAGEMENT OF O'SMOKE

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ahead of their "navire", ploughing through the waters of Temiscaming? They come! Soon they will be here to join in our ancient rites; in our prayers. Then they will leave again for Quebec's shores, and take the happy little bridal party with them."

O'Smoke and Cobalt watched in joyful silence.

"Great Scott! O holy shadows of the departed!" said Damkins, "I readily consent. Fill up the horn! Light the incense on the stone!"

Soon after, Ophelia departed for Quebec's shores, eloping with O'Smoke, and Cobalt led the bridal-party on their honeymoon.



## THE CHALLENGE

About six months had passed. The winter came and went. O'Smoke had returned with Cobalt and his bride. Ophelia's foreign owners had left the town.

"All's well!" had said George to Cobalt; "let them return." And they did so, taking their quarters in Jack Damkin's comfortable shack in Haileybury.

Cobalt, as usual, held his place in the rotunda, by the fire-place.

It was now in June. The ice had left the lake, and the steamers came and went just as before.

The entrance-door to the hotel-rotunda stood wide open.

. . . . Loafer entered.

He was a half-bred; a mixture of a wolf and goodness knows what. Why such a thing as this should be permitted to walk through a decent

## THE CHALLENGE

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habitation, Cobalt himself wondered. He loathed the very sight of Loafer.

Loafer approached Cobalt.

"My name is Loafer. Munro, Prospector Munro, of Elk-Lake, is my master. I want to speak to you."

"I don't," said Cobalt. "Begone!"

"Begone! Indeed begone!" furiously followed Loafer. "You know. I'm staying here. My master pays my bills; that's more than you can say. Begone! You do not seem to know the laws. I have a right to stay here."

Cobalt felt the insinuation. "I recognize no master," he answered, "I'm independent."

"You are a vagrant, a four-flusher, let me tell you; an over-presumptuous ass. You call yourself a dog; a dog? ah! I laugh at you. I want to see you; come out. This is no place for settlement of private grievances. Come out, I have a thing or two to say to you; come out! Now then, will you?"

Cobalt looked at Loafer. There was trouble ahead. He looked at him, measuring him as an adversary. Indeed this was a proposition fired by the glowing embers of months old jealousy.

"Damn Ophelia!" he grunted. "She's the whole trouble."

He was no coward; everybody knew that. What should he do? He meditated.

"Begone!" he said again.

## THE CHALLENGE

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Loafer gnashed his teeth in Cobalt's eyes. Mad with rage, he circled around Cobalt.

"You coward! milksop! four-flusher! vagrant! son of a cat!"

It was too much. Cobalt could stand it no longer. "I'm busy for the day," he said, "but I will meet you to-morrow in Cobalt, at the station, at 11 a.m.; and now begone!"

"It's one then, or the other; understand?" flashed Loafer. "Make up your will."

"Think of your own business," answered Cobalt haughtily; "it's more appropriate."

## THE FUTURE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

(A REVELATION)

"Keep sober as much as possible for the day," said Cobalt, "because I have something of the greatest importance to discuss with you this evening. Do not disappoint me."

"What is it?" asked George, when alone with Cobalt late that evening. "Is it serious?"

"It's hell!" said Cobalt. "That comes from interfering into others business. It's over O'Smoke and his Ophelia."

"You know that dog of Munro, 'Loafer'?"

"Well, he is jealous and he challenged me. Now I'm no coward, but I hate to fight with half-breds. It is disgusting!"

"Don't do it," answered George.

"He's persistent! Besides, the insult which I suffered is too great. It must be washed out in blood. It's an affair of life and death to one of us. See, now?"

## THE FUTURE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

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"I see," said George; "what will you do? Can I assist you?"

"No," answered Cobalt sadly; "I have accepted."

"That's awkward," admitted George. "Not that I feared for you at any other time; but I do so now. That fellow is as powerful as a bear and as warlike as an Indian. He's young; just in the prime of life, while you are getting old. Don't go."

"I must," said Cobalt. "Let's review the past: You've been my friend; my only friend!"

"And you have been my friend; my only real friend," said George.

"Don't drift into sentimentalities; stay by the subject." Cobalt begged. "If I return; alright! If I don't, well . . . I must relieve my mind."

"There's none alive who has the glimmer of an idea who I really am. . . . My earthly mission is closely interwoven with the: 'Romance of North-Ontario'."

"I guessed as much," awestruck whispered George.

And then, Cobalt told him all. . . . Of the house of power which his ancestors once held, in times of lore. Of their fabulous riches. Of other supernatural powers intervening; their struggles, and their ultimate destruction.

"What a romance!" ejaculated George.

## THE FUTURE OF NORTHERN ONTARIO

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"Who could have guessed it?"

"Yes," said Cobalt, "and take my advice: keep it to yourself; do not divulge the secret cheaply. If you make it known, be on your guard; it will make you great and rich; a power in the country."

"You know Ontario's future, now that I have revealed it to you. And when you once have arrived wherefor you mortals head; engulfed in power; crowned with fame and name, then, George, bring back to mind the times which we enjoyed, and . . . . we two!"

"You make me sad, my Cobalt!" whispered George, hardly suppressing the tears which struggled for escape. "My life will be an empty one without you."

"I thank you, thank you," slowly answered Cobalt.

He was very much affected. . . .

"One more word," he said: "Let drink alone in future. It is the chain which you have fastened to your miserable life."



## COBALT'S DEATH

The next morning was a dreary one. A cold and chilling wind was driving dismal looking clouds along the sky. Sometimes a little gush of rain would set in, but soon ceased again. It was a morning hard to registrate amongst the run of time. It was not this, nor that.

Cobalt was up early. Strolling along on the hotel-verandah, he allowed his eyes to wander in a forlorn, melancholy way over the great water-expanse of Lake Temiscaming, below him. Over to Burnt Island, and further, further away to Quebec's shore.

What he then thought, we here will never know. . . . .

It was his silent farewell from the playgrounds which he loved so much.

"Farewell Temiscaming!"

The rest is history. . . . .

Cobalt met his adversary; he met Loafer. They fought a fight unequal . . . . and Cobalt paid

## COBALT'S DEATH

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the earthly penalty.

A hush befell the North. Her mascot was gone; what did this omen signify?

Loud rang this question into every heart of the men who knew the North. . . . .

Yet, when the tumult subsided, another cry replaced the first: The cry which mankind knows and uses to console itself:

“(Le roi et mort. Vive le roi!)” or as it went:

“Cobalt et mort. Vive “Cobalt”, le champ d’argent.”

# THE MOOSE MOUNTAIN LIMITED.

A STORY OF THE NORTHERN ONTARIO  
BUSH

## PART I

### HOW THE MOOSE MOUNTAIN MINE WAS DISCOVERED

I am indebted for the fundamental facts of my story to Mr. W. J. Simpson; long time and honored inhabitant of Sellwood, Ontario, and as Mr. Simpson's qualities as a lover of the truth are too well known by everybody in his locality, such facts must therefor be taken in full confidence.

And so the story goes:

When Jim Taylor--Trapper, Hunter and Prospector--was still a young man (and that would be some twenty years ago) the country around Sellwood, a solid complex of Mountain-Ranges, was overgrown with tremendous trees, through which a lazy little stream, the Vermillion River, found it difficult to break its trail.

Only the pen of a "Chateaubriand" could ever describe the scene of such wild and natural

grandeur as we find it accomplished in the lines of his beautiful story "Atala":

"Bientôt la vase les cimente, les lianes les enchainent, et les plantes, y prenant racine de toutes parts, achèvent de consolider ces débris."

Such was the picture of the landscape in those years.

Sellwood was not in existence in those days—not as we find it to-day. There was no hustle and bustle of busy machine wheels anywhere; no dull report of blasting dynamite-charges ever disturbed the solitude. God's silence of nature reigned everywhere, interrupted only by the murmur of the river as it rolled along, and the monotonous cry of a vulture in the air.

A few log houses marked a small settlement occupied by some Indians, some Prospectors, and as said before, "Taylor".

Thrown upon their own resources in almost everything in life, these settlers lived, one might say, as one large family. There was no distinction made between "White" and "Red", as such is the case to-day between Polack and Swede, and American and Englishman. They hunted together, trapped for bear, beaver, otter and such other wild animals with which the bush abounded, and a regular festivity generally followed when one of them succeeded in falling one of the princely family of the bush, "the Moose", the uncrowned king of the wilderness.

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There existed no special laws as those of to-day, regulating the shooting seasons. Whenever a herd of Moose was reported to be in the vicinity, that is to say, within a radius of some ten or fifteen miles of the settlement, a noticeable excitement generally got hold of every member of this little community.

And one day—now about twenty years ago—an Indian reported the appearance of a few of these animals in close proximity.

A meeting was held, to which every settler attended. It was decided to organize a party which would start early the next morning for the spot.

Taylor was appointed as the leader.

Of special preparations there was little to be thought of. A good meal before starting, besides a few baits of dried meat, hanging on their leather belts, was all that seemed necessary. But a long Muzzle-Loader and a Powderhorn was on everyone's back.

The party, after travelling for some time without meeting with any indications of a Moose's presence, finally decided to disperse, so that every one of them might try his luck separately.

But, as we find it recorded, no success crowned the combined efforts of this day in the Trapper-Family's life.

One by one they emerged at dusk from the bush, disappointed and disheartened. Nobody



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had even as much as seen the spoor of the king of the wilderness; and when the roll was called, there was only Taylor absent.

But he too joined the rest of the party not long afterwards.

But what a sight!

Nobody remembered of having ever seen Taylor like this before.

His hat was gone and his shirt was torn to pieces. His face was scratched in many places. Was this really Taylor?

He threw himself on one of the mats of dried leaves and kept silent for a long time.

"Got your mark in, Taylor?" ventured one of the settlers, while the panikin of coffee circled the round.

"I did," said Taylor.

And where is the Moose?" demanded another.

"I left it where it fixed itself," retorted Taylor.

"Fixed itself!" said Johnson, the Swede; "how can a Moose fix itself?"

"Fixed itself!" stipulated Taylor; looking up and threateningly staring at everybody around him.

"Don't you see anything wrong, you fellows? Is it possible that you see nothing? Then look at my face, my hands! And where is my hat? Ha! ha! Am I drunk? No, no!"

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"Then, what's the matter Taylor? Explain yourself, please tell us."

"Just give me time, just a little rest." Everybody was aware that he needed it.

"Yes, I got him," began Taylor after a while. "But how? Good God! Never was there a Moose shot like this before. No, never!"

"I feel ashamed to tell you fellows. I feel like a murderer, a cold-blooded rascal—not like a hunter—and long will this stain rest on my memory. But, could I do different. Could I? Listen to my story, and tell me yourselves."

"Go on, Taylor," echoed the whole round. "Go on!"

"It must have been pretty late in the afternoon when all at once I sighted my Moose—and what a sight fellows! A full grown bull, such as I never beheld before in all my hunting days. I took good aim, and all of you do know: I never miss!"

"That's true," they all answered.

"And when the smoke cleared from before my face, what did I behold? An enraged animal, a ferocious Bull-Moose just shaking itself as one shaking a flour bag; and then straight for me."

"I dare say I hit him; but not mortally, and on he came."

"Crack, crack, crack! went bushes and trees in his road; straight for me, I tell you! He had

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seen me, and there was no time to reload."

"I drew my knife. On rushed the bull. I looked for an avenue of escape—to left and right—but it was too late. I felt my last hour had come."

"Crash! he went with his long and murderous horns into the tree against which I leaned. I felt the hot breeze of his respiration. I felt an avalanche of dry leaves drop on me from the tree, and again I felt as if my presence of mind was leaving me for a minute or so. When I again came to myself, I found that I was jammed between these tremendous horns and the tree. The horns had shaved my neck to both sides by a few inches, leaving just room enough to disengage myself from this unpleasant position."

"What an escape! I shuddered!" "Miracles still happen in our days," I thought; and instinctively looking for my rifle, I found same at my feet on the ground."

"To load was my first impulse. This done, I now surveyed Moose and surroundings."

"Brethren! Never shall I forget this sight! Never shall I forget the tree! Finding that a little spark of life remained in him, and to make fully sure of my game, I shot him this time straight through the heart."

"A tremendous shudder passed over him. His legs gave way under him—I could see that—but he did not slide to the ground. The horns,

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much like a pair of corkscrews, held on to the tree. I saw the tree slightly bend under this great weight, but both held to one another. It was of no use to make an attempt of separation, and all of you will readily admit this to-morrow, when we will bring him home."

"A close shave right enough," remarked Johnson, the Swede, "but why worry, Taylor? You have only done what everyone of us would have done in similar circumstances. Well, let's see by to-morrow.

Full of Taylor's story, each one went to his cabin and early the next morning the party struggled through the bush, still led by Taylor.

One mile after another was passed by in silence, but there was no Moose to be found and no sign was given by Taylor that the place was at hand. Taylor himself seemed to be growing uneasy, and more than once he stopped, scanning the multitudinous rows of trees, until he threw himself down at last on a tree stump, despair written over his face.

"I have missed the place," said he more to himself than to his party, "and yet, it cannot be far from here."

Some of his party looked on in silence; others grinned until Johnson, the Swede, interposed:

"Say, Taylor! Did you have a drink yesterday? Now, now, don't get mad old man! But doesn't it look funny; first this story, and now

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nothing to back it up with. Say, didn't you dream?"

"I did not dream and I do not drink," answered Taylor angrily. What I told you is the truth, and he who does not believe had better leave it."

The Moose could not be found, and for many a year afterwards Taylor's story gave food for good jokes.

But Taylor was a changed man from this day. He avoided his fellow-trapper's company as much as he could, took long spells into the bush alone, and was often not seen for many a week. Then one day he came back from the bush, his rifle, as usual, over his shoulder; but with a heavy bag dangling by his side, filled with a dark-grey rock.

He never spoke as much as one word to anybody; disappeared again a few days later with his bag of stones, towards Sudbury, from whence he returned, one fine autumn day accompanied by a party of gentlemen.

Soon it became known that Taylor had made a valuable "Mineral Discovery", the rights of which he sold for a handsome price to some American financiers. When asked what name he liked to give to the Company about to be formed, he answered without hesitation:

"The Moose Mountain Mine."

And so the Moose Mountain Limited went

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into existence, and let us hope that her prospects may be, indeed—"unlimited".



## PART 2

### TWENTY YEARS AFTER

Years passed by,—many—many a long year.

Where silence once reigned supreme, there began a busy hustle and bustle of fly and cog-wheels. Hundreds of strange faces came and went, year in, year out. Not silver-clear as before, the Vermillion River, around what now was the villayette of Sellwood, dragged along with its waters a slimy colored coating; the refuse of rich iron ore.

And so, down to not long ago.

A pleasant, just and capable gentleman functioned in the person of Mr. W. Browning, as the company's manager. He was assisted by a staff of reliable help, both efficient and jovial alike.

A well modulated feeling seemed to have penetrated and taken possession of this number of inmates, who lived their life as in a constant summer dream. Everybody's work—in itself easy—left ample time for perpetual enjoyments;

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dances and parties during the long and monotonous winter months; and fishing and hunting-picnics in the beautiful summer time.

And thus it happened that once, not long ago, in honour of the visit of a distinguished guest from the United States, closely connected with the company's affairs, a hunting expedition was arranged on one nice autumn day.

Mr. Browning had his statistical work thrown aside and nothing in his easy way of conversation with his guest and other members of this expedition indicated the slightest reference to the work of every day.

"Such is the life in a mining camp, where genius and justice happily blend."

Two rows of amiably excited human beings began their march towards the bush which year by year evermore receded from the neighbourhood of the village.

"Soon, there will be enough of cleared ground for a good road to Sudbury," somebody remarked to Mr. Wright, a notable government official, who was a member of the expedition.

"Gentlemen, and Ladies," answered Mr. Wright: "I am glad to announce that your rightful wishes will soon be a reality. The Government having realized the necessity. . . ."

"Beg your pardon, Mr. Wright, for interrupting; but we Canadian people always allow our ladies a front seat in an address," said Charlie

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Lafleur, looking proudly around as if he was the man who won the battle of the Marne.

"Well spoken, Charlie; never thought you that clever," followed Mr. Flaneur, the sub-manager. "You will remind me to-morrow for an increase of your wages, which I intend to support."

"Thank you very much," modestly answered Charlie Lafleur, "but I rather wished you would not. I feel I'm paid well enough."

"Idiot!" grunted Sproat; "as if one could ever have too much." And a savage look shot away over his heavy black-rimmed spectacles.

"Thank God," satirically remarked Lafleur, "I am no such miser as you, and know when I have enough."

"Wish I could say the same," interlocuted Taylor; "but I must admit I don't."

"What do you mean?" asked Goodman, the paymaster. "Enough what? . . . Soda? . . ."

Everybody laughed, and so did Taylor.

"What's the joke?" broke in Pat. O'Gorman, hanging closely on to Mrs. Pat.

"O, nothing!" answered somebody in the crowd. They are only conspiring in an ill-concealed way against the O. T. A., these local option bolsheviki!"

Mile after mile was traversed amid humorous and pleasant conversation, and heaven itself devoted special attention for everybody's welfare. A fresh breeze fanned the air, and if the perspira-

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tion trickling down from Father Goodman's forehead even soaked into his eyes, it could hardly be taken for tears.

He appeared a perfect picture of joy and self-satisfaction, and his paternal glances never ceased to wander in the direction of his darling's whereabouts, pretty Miss Dorothea, "La belle de Sellwood".

There certainly existed good reasons for it. Was she not the prettiest and cleverest in the village, amongst her sex and age? Who managed the company's statistical affairs better than Dolly? Who knew every letter file without an index better than Dorothea? Yes, it was an open secret, that she could detect an error in a trial balance by simply gliding her pretty little fingers over the expanded sheet, stopping mechanically at the very item which carried the intolerable offence against the company's directors.

And as "La belle de Sellwood", well, well! . . . An unprejudiced local opinion willingly admitted to her the front seat upon the bench of feminine beauty.

Now—suddenly—father Goodman stopped. He stopped as if struck by a thunderbolt. A terrible yell arrested him in his pleasant reverie of self-satisfaction. There was no doubt, it was Dolly's voice.

"Heavens! Mercy! what has happened?"

The echoes died slowly away, and a feeling of

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stupefaction stood written on everybody's face. There, with her eyes directed heavenwards, pretty Miss Dorothea remained standing, motionless; as if transformed by magic into a statue of salt.

"Mercy! Goodness! Dolly!" was all that Father Goodman could lay his voice to.

But there was not a member of the party—alive—who did not rush like an express to the scene of disaster, led by Cowan and Dr. Green; both seemingly possessed of the velocity of aeroplanes,

"What has happened, Miss Goodman?" asked Cowan.

"And what has frightened you?" echoed Dr. Green. There also rushed ahead Mathews, the storekeeper, who, in spite of the fact that he was the official sandwich-keeper for the day and laboring under the no mean encumbrance of fifteen parcels of egg and ham sandwiches closely held under his arms, made five-yard steps with an elasticity which would have easily out-distanced a "Tom Longboat".

"What's gone wrong?" roared Williams, the chemist. "And for heaven's sake!" whispered Charlie Lafleur.

Excepting a few that can be singled out of the party, every one rushed along at top speed.

"Poor Father Goodman!" said Sproat, "I pity him!"



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"What for?" placidly remarked Taylor, who alone kept cool. "There's nothing wrong; what do you people get excited for?"

"Nothing wrong!" burst in Cowan, eyeing him with a most menacing stare. Nobody had ever seen little Cowan so angry.

"Nothing wrong! well, only an old fiction monger like you, you . . . you!"—and he fortunately swallowed the rest, so that nobody would be able to make out with certainty, what he really intended to say.

"Upon my word!" grunted Taylor; "it shows bad form, to say the least."

"I'll give you bad form; wait, when I get you next! . . . Chloroform, is that what you need!" murmured Dr. Green under his mustache, unobserved.

A regular cordon of sympathizers had by this time encircled the scene where pretty Miss Dorothea still remained and scanned the air. Yet nobody stood near enough to perceive what she perceived.

"There! there! there!" was all that she could say, and so reclined into her father's arms.

And there, there, to be sure; there! some twenty feet above the ground, with tail hanging downwards, the horns still tightly rammed into the tree, there . . . hung the skeleton of the Moose! . . .

"I thank Thee, O Providence!" exclaimed old



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Taylor, breaking the silence while everybody looked up:

"This is the Moose I shot—now twenty years ago. . . . My honour is vindicated."

"Take a note of this, Browning; let it be placed on my desk, Goodman, so that I might take the particulars with me to New York and have such memorable facts produced at the next company's meeting," said Mr. Ironstone, the distinguished guest from the U. S. . . . very, very deeply impressed.

I wonder, if "Ben Akiba" wasn't wrong after all?



# THE DIAMOND

A STORY OF THE TRANSVAAL RIVER  
DIAMOND DIGGINGS

## I

Leaning over the railings of the outgoing Elder Dempster Liner, the "Monterey", at Halifax—fitted for war transport service—stood an athletic figure, young and handsome, frantically searching his pockets.

"What's your trouble, Jack?" asked his neighbour; another young athlete.

"Why, gracious me! My handkerchief man, my handkerchief!"

"Well, take this; it'll serve the purpose;" the other answered, handing him a crumpled copy of a newspaper. "Here, try this!"

"Thanks," answered the young man. And now aware of the more evident momentum, he realized that the great ship had found her soul and had begun to move forward.

He waved and waved his newspaper copy towards the shore. To his mother and father, standing there to bid him farewell, it could not have seemed to be anything different than a plain

## THE DIAMOND

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piece of cloth, a handkerchief, or an instrument used in scenes of farewell.

Jack departed from his native land, at the quay of Halifax, a member of the second contingent bound for South Africa, to help to fight the Boers of the Transvaal for England's glory.

Britain, being at war with the Boers of the Transvaal, had called for assistance on her children from her great oversea empire.

Such an opportunity came as unexpected to Jack O'Reilly, as would have come a prospect for a new and successful touch on his stern father's purse.

Reviewing his life—the twenty-three years of his earthly existence—he had come to the definite conclusion that he really was not much good after all. Too easily swayed about by his friends; too fond of races, hockey and baseball; too unconcerned about the real value of the dollar—and while, of course, his mother's pet—he knew only too well that the game was up, as far as further help from his father's resources was concerned.

His education had been very carefully out-layed and promised success, had he but adhered to the commercial road planned for him by his father.

His prospects amongst the fair sex would have also satisfied many a young man of his age; but somehow, no serious entanglements ever

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resulted from his various but innocent love escapades, and they had all left him—at least his heart—fairly unembarrassed.

But now he looked a real man, dressed up in his simple khaki uniform which indicated, by the two letters, "S. H." on his shoulder-straps, his membership as a trooper in Strathcona's Horse.

In due time he arrived in Cape-Town and after an astounding rapidity of flitting events, during active service, he found himself all at once confronted—amongst the great boulders—with a youthful face, not more than a score of yards ahead of him.

Two pair of eyes met, and both rifles drew into position simultaneously. Challenges were received and answered, all in due conformity to a civilized rule of warfare.

There was now at hand one of those doubtful situations which leave a decision either to Providence or to the chivalrous side of human nature.

Both rifles lowered to the ground. There followed a moment of suspense. . . . .

But, who could have noticed that imperceptible movement far away to the left!

First, an expression of utmost astonishment, giving way at once to a tremor shaking the whole frame. The color in the youthful face before him became an ashen-pale. The human form shrunk together and fell, face forward, to



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the ground.

O'Reilly rushed towards him, and examined the limp form which only a minute ago was a human being like himself; a mother's son, but henceforth nothing more than a piece of clay, food perhaps for the vultures.

He made sure that life was extinct. Searching the dead man's pockets for an identification, he found a letter addressed: "Jacoba Van Wyk, Wolmaransstadt".

"Jacoba van Wyk," he mused. "Poor, poor Jacoba van Wyk!"

Carefully surveying his surroundings, he now prepared for a gradual retreat from a position too far advanced. On reaching his detachment again, he placed into the care of his superior officer, said letter, to be dealt with in the ordinary military routine of information supply which our army at war—for humanity's sake—never omits to perform.

Pretoria was now occupied by the British and the "Four Colours" of the Transvaal Republic, floating until then over the Government Building, had been replaced by the Union Jack. The war was practically at an end.

The Canadian contingents, no longer needed, went home; a thousand of their members after another.

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Jack mingled his joy with them as they departed from the quay of Cape-Town. He sang with them, "O Canada" and "The Maple Leaf Forever", and then went north again to try his fortunes in this new country; to wrestle within new surroundings with the chances of luck—for good or evil.

## II

Many a mother's son has found a great benefit in travelling abroad, when young and filled with the fire and lust for adventure. Such years will invariably help to reduce many uncontrollable habits and vices to which we are all subject, to an acceptable minimum. They will also open the eyes of a real man, and enable him to see a well directed life in its more proper perspective.

And what on earth, after all, can equal the "welcome home", one receives, after such years of roaming about in the world?

Yet, many are the little white crosses, scattered along the highways of life and in the wilds of the veldt. They speak a pitiful language of their own to the wanderer, who, staying his march for a minute reads an inscription. While so doing, far away, over sheer endless plains of water and stretches of land, a mother through uncounted hours is pleading with Providence. In silent contemplation and prayers she holds before

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her a little piece of cardboard: "the fading image of her darling's face."

Time over time, Jack O'Reilly repeated to himself the lines which ended his mother's last letter:

"The war is now over, my son, and we will have you back with us soon. Come home, my dear, come home!"

An expression of infinite gentleness would hush over his features; then with an exertion, as if to break from an enthralling bondage, he would fling his head back.

A new resolve was on his mind. He would join the legions of those in hunt of a fortune.

### III

The spell was broken. The Government of the Transvaal had settled all the disputes between the "Diamond-Diggers and the Owners" of farm-lands along the Vaal-River near the village of Christiana. No boer, (farmer) owning land in this disputed area, could henceforth place a legal obstacle in the road of those who came from all parts of the country, attracted by the possible prospects of making their fortunes there, over night.

Diamonds had been found in the river-bed for decenials of time past; more beautiful in quality, as such which claimed their birthplace in the famous "De Jager's or Boulfontain mines of Kimberley." And it was surmised, that somewhere in the very river-bed, a crater; a regular mine, was hidden from the eyes of men and their insatiable ambitions.

Every year, when the waters of the Vaal began to recede, and the dry season began to lick the boulders along the shores—even laying bare

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the river-bed, now bleaching in a merciless sun—the diamond-digger would be there to gamble with his chances.

In this year, now that their work could be legally proceeded with, the number of those adventurers was endless.

It was swelled by many of those which remained unemployed through the effects of the war, and by others which the war had reduced to poverty.

Day in and day out, one Oxen-wagon after another, filled with whole families of poor farmers, would find their road from the mountain ridges to the valleys of the Vaal; this for miles east and west of Christiana. Here resided the Government agent, entrusted to issue a permit to all the newcomers in search of diamonds.

Van Wyk, of Wolmaransstadt, residing close to these alluvial-diggings, was one of the first attracted by them, and since August of this particular year, he had been trying his luck at this game of hope and disappointment.

His efforts had not been crowned with advantageous results so far, and it was now the middle of October. This meant that the rainy season—already overdue—would soon set in, and that the hard work of the fortune-hunters would be at an end.

The season had been an exceptionally dry one, and thousands of anxious eyes scanned the



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horizon day by day in hopes for another respite.

The sun had just set behind the mountain-ridges and complete darkness, following quickly in sub-tropical climes, would soon be at hand.

"Nothing again. Another day's work in vain," he said to himself as well as to the kaffir-boy by his side. "Here Jantje, tie our tools together; let's go home."

The lithe young native obeyed him dutifully. He was well used to this life and his expectations did not go any further than the natural demands of his stomach indicated. Their oxen wagon stood nearby, holding in its simplicity their home and comfort.

"Father! father! I am so glad you are home," sounded a pleasant welcome from the lips of a pretty girl, who by her age and appearance stood about equally distant from the tender years of childhood to the awakening of a woman's life.

Scrutinizing the expression on the old man's face, she ventured, hesitatingly: "You found nothing, Daddy? O, well, don't be sad, Daddy. We will be rewarded some day. . . ."

"How do you know? Who told you?" queried the old man.

His hand plaited her rich dark hair while his eyes, with an unusual expression of affection rested on her handsome figure. "What do you

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mean my child?"

Half teasingly, half as if pleading with her father, she answered: "I know we will be rewarded, I know" . . . .

"Who told you?" asked Van Wyk, raising his eyes.

"Nobody told me, Daddy, nobody. I have been dreaming. And, will you believe me, I held a lot of pretty stones in my hand."

The old man found it hard to suppress a deep sigh, now on his lips. She was the only one in the world to hold his hopes high.

Complete darkness had by this time enveloped the camp, and its life and activities. Here and there twinkled through the darkness the lights of camp-fires, around which the simple natives held their usual pictural midnight gatherings, undisturbed by their white masters. The monotonuous rhythms of their evening songs, accompanied by the shrill tune of a concertina, floated in subdued tones through the stillness of night.

And then, silence reigned supreme.

Jack O'Reilly, coming down the country road, had reached the diamond-diggings; exhausted and hungry after his long and tiresome

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tramping.

"Who's there?" demanded Van Wyk; looking at his late visitor.

Used to such an unceremonial approach, there was little to be added in the way of a further introduction.

Van Wyk had set him down as one of those numberless adventurers who, like himself, wished to try his fortune on the inexhaustible wheels of nature.

"You are too late in the season," he said. "The waters of the Vaal will soon be down and the game will be over for the year."

"Is there then nothing to do here? Nothing, for a man who is willing to work at anything?" replied O'Reilly.

"Nothing at all," answered Van Wyk.

"That's strange," said O'Reilly.

He had never done much in his life; but he had heard from the people at home, in his country, "Canada", that there was always something to do, for those willing to try; such as picking berries or fruits in the orchards, trapping, or other kindred work in the woods.

"Nothing at all!" was O'Reilly's wondering reply. "What are you people doing for a living?"

"Are you a stranger here?" asked Van Wyk.

"Yes", answered O'Reilly, a stranger here, as you say; a soldier, left behind from a Canadian contingent. Could it be that you would bear me

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a grudge?"

"No, no," answered Van Wyk, "not I. Come in," he said kindly, "you must be tired and hungry."

"You bet," truthfully answered the young man.

Van Wyk pushed the canvas of the tent-door aside.

"Jacoba! Jacoba!" he called.

The girl appeared on the threshold. In the semi-darkness before her, O'Reilly was at an advantage, and in wonder he took in the picture of youth standing before him.

"O!" he said, "what a surprise!"

Jacoba's face coloured a little. Young as she was, she had only her instinct to guide her.

She held out her hand to him, and said: "Welcome!"

O'Reilly awoke in the morning, determined to repay these simple people of the veldt who had received him so kindly.

Two more months had dragged on. The rain, so much dreaded by these people, seemed to never come. The veldt was bare and brown-red; reduced by a merciless, scorching summer sun.

Van Wyk and O'Reilly had worked hard that day, and when evening came, they found themselves assembled around the large table in the tent, each in turn telling his stories to the others.

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Time and circumstances had played their part amongst these simple minded people of the veldt. The little embarrassment felt at first had long given place to an intimacy, familiar in circles representing a life of home.

O'Reilly listening to one of the stories, detected himself admiring the pretty Jacoba.

"I know that we will succeed," she suddenly stated, still thinking of her beautiful dream. "I know we will, and before the rain comes, too. We will find our lot of diamonds; plenty—plenty of them!"

"Why not tell me where to dig, Jacoba?" asked O'Reilly. "Will you not tell me?"

He held her hands, repeating his words again.

"I can't," she said. "It was not made known to me in my dream. All that I do know is, that we will find a treasure.

"In your dream!" teasingly said the young man. "You have been dreaming, Jacoba?"

"Just dreaming," simply answered the girl. "Do you believe in dreams, Mr. O'Reilly?"

"I do," he said. "That is, in a way. I believe that persistency must be rewarded in the end, and that, as long as our wishes lead us on and our hopes remain to spurn us to new work, there must be success one day. Such dreams as yours are simply the reflections of our wishes, unobtained."

"There is something very mysterious about

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it all. We seem to feel things we do not know of, while wandering along the borders of another life and of another world. Do you understand?"

"No," answered Jacoba, simply. "I do not understand. Do you mean that our wishes would never be anything more than mere dreams? Possibilities; but just dreams?"

O'Reilly could not find answers to such questions. . . . .

They were now at the entrance of the tent. Above them a starry bright sky, clear and silent.

"Jacoba," he said, "I have something to say to you, don't go. . . . ."

He held her hand in his own. "Don't leave me, Jacoba!"

Jacoba lowered her eyes. A crimson color flushed over her face. "O, don't Mr. O'Reilly."

"Jacoba!"

The girl's eyes remained fixed to the ground.

"Tell me something of the war; of your brother Piet who never came back. You were young, very young when he left. Did you never hear of him?"

"Yes," she answered "we did; a letter from him was sent to us by the British. It was his last."

"And nothing else," demanded O'Reilly, "nothing more? Show me that letter, Jacoba."



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"I know this letter, Jacoba," he exclaimed.

A look of utmost astonishment gleamed over her face. "You do!" she said wonderingly; "how can you?"

O'Reilly now held the letter in his hand, reading the address: Jacoba Van Wyk, Wolmaransstadt.

The colour in his face faded. He trembled. "You?" he queried, "you Jacoba, are his sister?"

A painful glance from her eyes tried to burn itself deep into his face; into his very soul.

"You knew him then! O! you killed Piet."

"No," answered O'Reilly slowly; "but I witnessed the hour of his death."

Two human hearts, torn asunder in their feelings, remained in dead silence.

Jacoba raised her hands to her eyes. "O! why did you tell me? O, my God!"

She shrunk away from him. Her outstretched hands slipped limp to her side. Her eyes expressed the terror which a viper produces when taken unawares.

"You! You! . . . ." and she was gone. . . .

It was the afternoon of Christmas evening. The sun-rays still flared destruction by drought, over the wide veldt.

O'Reilly lifted himself out of a mass of gravel and slimes, and began, one shovel full after

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another, to fill the shaker before him. A continuous stream of water would reduce the quantity to a smaller and smaller one, while the mechanical action of a motion, familiar to this process of assortment, would find the heaviest pebbles ultimately accumulated in the centre.

All at once his vision became fascinated. What did he see there, before him? Was it possible?

His fingers stretched out and held . . . . one, two, three; no, still more and more of these ardently desired fragments. He scraped the mud from one with the nails of his fingers, drew it through his teeth; looked at it again, running it over a broken piece of glass. No doubt, these were diamonds.

Heavens, and of what size! A veritable fortune! And there at his feet, in the mud, probably more.

O'Reilly looked around. Had anybody seen him? Why tell anyone about it? Why not keep it all for himself?

Again he bowed over his treasure. He struck his forehead with the flat of his hand. Was he not dreaming!

Dreaming? No, this was no dream. He held the sharp-edged little fragments in his hands, his fingers tightening over same, until their sharp edges began to hurt his flesh.

Again he looked up anxiously surveying his

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surroundings. Nobody had seen him. No one was near; neither kaffir-boy nor baas, and the waggon camp with Jacoba, loomed in the distance.

There was no room for doubt; it was a rich find. What should he do about it?

Dreaming! dreaming! But where did he hear this word before, of dreams and of dreaming?

O, yes! Jacoba, the beautiful flower of the veldt appeared to him as a vision. She had told him of her dreams, which he so wisely explained to her. And now . . . .

Like a flash it came back to his memory. And how could he think of it! Think to deprive her of her rights and of her father's hopes! More than this. Was he not mysteriously and persistently drawn to her? Now he knew that he was in love with Jacoba.

He had not seen her or spoken to her since the evening he had told her of her brother. He would do it now, this very evening; Christmas evening. . . . .

Hundreds of times he assured himself that the existing differences could be explained. He would stand before her again, bringing truth, consolation, happiness and fortune.

He lifted his eyes to the skies. His gaze wandered far away over the mountain-ridges. There too, something drew his attention. He beheld little balls of white clouds in the southwestern sky. He knew their meaning well: The

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rain was at last at hand, and therewith an end to their work.

He laughed. Be it so, what did it matter?

The air was depressing and he felt the heat keenly. The perspiration was trickling in large pearls over his forehead, and a strange feeling of thirst seemed to possess him. His gums felt raw and his tongue stiff and heavy.

He bowed down to the little stream of water by his feet and satisfied his longing thirst.

A few minutes passed. A little shiver rolled down his spine and he felt dizzy, and a little heavy. "Perhaps the excitement over the find?" he mused. No other thoughts had now a place on his mind but: Jacoba! Christmas! Diamonds! He went home.

"You avoided my company, Jacoba," he said to her later in the afternoon. "Do you know that you wronged me?"

Her lithe form shrank from him, but his hand held her back.

"Not this way, Jacoba!" he pleaded. "It is Christmas to-day. Do you know what this means?"

"This is the day when our hearts open to all, and our grievances cease; all wrongs are forgiven and forgotten. This is the day upon which old and young, in Christianity, should rejoice and give happiness to one another. Here is my contribution to your happiness, Jacoba. I am only a

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messenger, bringing it to you. It's yours by right, by title and law; you may keep it." He handed her the little package . . . . and my kind reader will know. . . . .

Raising his sunburnt hand over his forehead . . . . staggering a little . . . . he silently slipped to his tent.

The rain set in during the late afternoon in great torrents; but after the great showers the stars twinkled as ever before.

The air was now fresh and cool.

Wrestling with the unmistakable symptoms of approaching fever, O'Reilly found himself layed low.

A few days had past under anxious observation and devoted care by doctor and nurse.

"Will he live, doctor?"

Like the cry of a hunted animal came these words from the depths of a human heart in utter despair; from Jacoba's lips.

The kindhearted old man looked up and shook his grey head. He had seen much in his life; he understood everything.

"We are in God's hands, my child," he answered soothingly, "all we can do is to pray to Him and implore His mercy. I will be here again



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in the evening," he added, leaving the tent. "Be brave my girl, be brave!"

While kneeling beside his bed, Jacoba held O'Reilly's hand in her own. O! if only she could divert these licking fire-tongues of fever to herself! How willingly she would have done so. She knew everything now—now that she was going to lose him. Was it right that she should lose him? The highest barriers in a woman's heart are erected where they should help to conceal the full force of love. But there are times when they are utterly disregarded and thrown aside with uncontrollable contempt. This feeling capable of sacrifice, even of life and of existence, exerted itself in her at that moment, the illuminated second on the dial glass of the supreme hour of life. Young as she was she had learnt in a few days what otherwise a lifetime often fails to accomplish. She loved Jack with that girlish innocence which alone means: Life and Creation.

Will we ever fathom its meaning?

"See, Jacoba! . . . . There, there! We understood one another. Piet was willing to shake hands with his country's enemy the moment his life was wiped out. Believe me, Jacoba!"

"I believe, O God, I believe!" whispered Jacoba, caressing his feverish hand. She knew that she heard the truth from these dry lips; from these exertions of a brain ragged about in



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fever delirium. And the picture before him seemed to change. He lifted himself a little in his blankets, while his eyes remained in a fixed stare upon an object fancied, . . . . distant—afar.

“Come Jacoba! This is my mother. Kiss her lips. She has been waiting for me so long, ah, so long! . . . .”

“Be good to her, mother!” . . . . .

He fell back, exhausted. And then again at times over times, while the terrible rattling of respiration continued, these pictures would keep on changing from one to another, in a calyoscopic succession.

“I did not kill him, Jacoba! . . . . This is my mother, Jacoba! . . . .”

The terrible Enteric Fever had pierced and perforated his elastic youthful system, and there was no strength left in him to resist the final shock. And when it came, the end was painless—as it usually is—like a walk from a house of trouble to the Elysian fields of rest and of peace and of plenty . . . .

Let's sympathize, my reader, with those left behind. A girl whose little heart was breaking, while still trying to hold the escaping flood of life . . . . . and a mother, far, far over the great ocean expanse, her eyes rivetted on the fading

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away features beheld in a setting evening sun:  
her darling's face; her son, who would never come  
back. . . . .

# A CONTRAST

## A CONTRAST

Anno Domini 1890.— O, terrible year!

Which of you, Polish-Russian Jews who have gone through those times and are yet alive, now thriving in peace and prosperity this side of the great Atlantic divide, could ever forget the terrors it wrought into the hearts of five million of your industrious people?

What ailed you, mighty “Nero”, Alexander III; Czar of all Russians?

What terrible dreams dictated your cruel national policy towards these “Innocents”?

“What!” you said: “Five millions of Jews in my Polish-Russian domain? Too many! Throw out one million of them!”

And your word was law in the country.

Morning:

And they came in an endless procession, in the grey, icy autumn-mornings, thousands upon thousands. Old and young, weak and shivering;





"She is Dying, Chaim, She is Dying"



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poor mothers and worn-out fathers. Pitiful sights indeed, many of them destined to be: "happy and laughing children".

Every class of these poor creatures represented a human wreck of its own kind.

Housed for the time being in filthy reeking railway trucks; unwashed, unkempt, hungry and cold.

"She is dying, Chaim, she is dying!"

For the last time the shrunken little form on the hard railway bench is making a faint attempt to stretch her wasted arms to her mother's breast, imploring help and protection. One last look of frightful despair, and then, behold! Peace and rest is gliding over her chalk-white cheeks and lips.

"Jehovah, Jehovah! And you allowed it?"

So prayed one of the most miserable of mothers. No word, no audible sound from a poor father's parched throat. His emotion or feelings only marked by the mechanical action of a pair of dirty hands, pulling through his iron-grey hair.

Jehovah! Jehovah! Mother and father had lost their child.

Evening:

The Imperial train, ablaze in display, has just noiselessly entered the same railway station

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which was the scene of this morning's human tragedy, bringing home to his empire, from a visit abroad, Alexander III, ruler of all Russians.

Luxurious carpets roll along from carriage exit to the Imperial reception chambers. Servants in gay uniforms, decorated with glittering stars studded with diamonds, rush busily up and down the station platform.

Behold him descending the purple-colored draped stairs! The mighty autocrat in whose hands the life of his Jewish subjects is less than dust!

No kindly smile for anybody. His Imperial stare—lofty and haughty—wandering into the distance.

He walks along in silence, alone.

And after him a train of lackeys; some ladies-in-waiting, and some children.

Are they your children, O mighty Nero?

They must be.

And children cry sometimes. You take notice; you turn back.

"Papa, Papa!"

Ah, you have a heart!

Your gigantic form bends down. You take the little tot into your arms. You caress him and you kiss his brow. You speak a few kind words. The child is happy again, and an over-anxious lady-in-waiting cares for the rest.

Jehovah! God of their fathers.





Papa! Papa!  
Ah, You Have a Heart!

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Bogh! God of all Russians.

Same God of All! Thou hast seen the  
"Morning" and the "Evening" hours.

Yet—"Revenge is mine"! So spoke the  
Prophets. Behold the transformation, O man-  
kind! Bow and think!

Yourself, have paid the price in full in  
earthly agonies, O mighty Alexander!

Your family is destroyed! Your crown is  
broken and all the lustrous diamonds therein have  
been stolen!

Your Dynasty is extinct!

Your Country is lingering in the ugliest con-  
vulsions!

Your People are raving mad!

Your Empire is reduced to ashes!

Verily! verily! "The mills of God grind  
slowly, but they grind exceeding small".  
(Longfellow).

Anno Domini 1920.





# A VERY REGRETTABLE MISTAKE

AN ELECTION-TIME STORY

## A VERY REGRETTABLE MISTAKE

The aspirant to authorship was getting more depressed and nervous every new day. He had staked his last cent on his success in publishing his book himself, and now began to find himself more and more financially embarrassed as well as disheartened by the slow progress his publication experienced from the hands of his publishers. So many questions of moment had to be decided upon: There was the form of the type, which, now having the first specimen of proofs before him, seemed to him full of expectancy concentrated on every detail of this first child of his brains—clumsy and ugly. The quality of the paper looked now entirely too thin and too cheap, and promised to give his book an appearance of an object of hunger and famine, as much as if it happened to be a survival of the seven lean years of Egypt. The proof slips, crammed with printers devils reappearing again and again in every new strip, seemed to possess the indestructible heads of a Hydra or mythological Dragon.

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His nerves becoming overtaxed, he felt his usual elasticity on the wane, and himself nearing the brink to a general physical breakdown.

"It's really hell!" he exclaimed, exasperated and dismayed. "I wish I had this job once off my hands," he said, addressing the young editor and manager of the printing department, where his book was being constructed. "I swear to you, my dear Alphonse, that this will be my last book as much as it is my first.

"Slowly, slowly, my friend," answered Alphonse Boyd, the handsome editor of the "Observer", the organ of useful information supply of the mining town and district of O.

"You are on the road to name and fame and should readily content yourself in the few trivial points of discomfort, which, after all, beset the road of anybody straying away from the out-ridden paths of our daily complacency. And say, really, who would not? You are over the stoniest sections of your road now, and after all, it's only a matter of time for you to become famous and incidentally rich."

"So! and starve in the meantime," answered the author.

"What's turned out wrong?" queried Boyd. "Did anything interfere with your credit?"

"You tapped the nail on the head," mournfully acknowledged the author; "that's what it is. They notified me this morning at my hotel to look

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for new quarters. The Chinese restaurant keeper also refused to have anything further to do with me before my old account showed a substantial reduction; and all my pleadings and references to my undoubtable forthcoming fame and success, drew—now isn't it abominable?—nothing but an unmistakable shrug from his shoulders.

"Of course, he has a right to his own opinion of such prospective events and possibilities."

"We cannot blame him," answered Boyd; and then continued: "This should in no way dishearten you. Why not give another hotel and another restaurant a chance? It's only a matter of time. Why not try Lee Sing, the other Chinaman, and Grouch of the Royal Hotel? Surely, they will accommodate you for a month or so. It's worth trying. Besides, it helps distributing one's liabilities to an agreeable extent. My advice is: try Lee Sing and the Royal; it will add prestige to your name. Staying at a first class hotel in town will help you considerably, and, as for Lee Sing's dishes, they will not materially differ from Harry Kee's."

"And then, what's more; circumstances are decidedly favorable for you at the present time. Everybody is busily taken up with the affairs of state: the forthcoming election. After all, my boy, you are not the only one who has his troubles. Look at me! Do you think that I am sleeping on a bed of roses these days? In his turmoil of

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controversies going on in the columns of our papers, by people waxing warm over the forthcoming election? Do you think this funny?"

"I thought it was," languidly asserted the author. "I wish they talked a little about me these days. Wouldn't such an advertising campaign be just the very thing for my book? I feel more uneasy every day. This icy silence is positively killing! After all, I print my book for sale and not for keepsake."

"Don't get restless, my friend," assured him Boyd in his patronizing way. "You will have your due share of publicity in good time too. Leave that to me." And a pleasant smile hushed over his handsome features.

"You know," he said, "I promised you this and I mean to keep my word with you. By the way—did you get that cut of yours from the portrait engravers?"

The author searched his overcoat pockets and extracted therefrom a little parcel, carefully wrapped in tissue paper.

"Here," he said, handing it to his friend.

Boyd unfolded the paper, looked at it for a minute and remarked: "It's really good workmanship. Let's find out how it looks on paper."

He took a step back from his office towards the workshop and returning again he now handed the author the first imprint, executed on a small sheet of glazed paper.

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"It's really good," he said. "Look at yourself, Sonny; now, isn't that nice? It's good enough to secure you a majority vote for a seat in a constituency in the forthcoming election. What a pity, you never tried!"

"Hang politics!" answered the author. "I wish I could know what the critic will have to say about my work. That would be far more interesting to me. Yes, yes,—the critic! You know, I am getting absolutely funky. I wish this suspense was once over.

"Everyone has his day, my boy," soothingly answered Boyd. "Be patient, man; be patient!"

He extended his hand to the author; "leave this with me now," he suggested. "It is almost the last link in your work, and now that we have it, well . . . ."

"Keep it," answered the author. And he left the editor's office. . . . .

Alone, Boyd mused for a while. Then he slapped his leg with the flat of his hand. "I've got it," he cried, chuckling by himself. If this is not the joke of the time—the whole election campaign—then I'm not Boyd!" I am bursting to think of it in advance.

"I'll do it! I'll do it!"

He rang the bell, and the little fellow engaged for all kinds of office errands, appeared on the



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threshold, bringing with him a handful of paper strips ready for proof-reading.

"Any more of them, Jimmy?" demanded Boyd. "Let's see. Ah!" he exclaimed: "This will do!" He held the page containing the pictures of the two election candidates before him and read the wording below: "Your vote and influence is respectfully solicited;" in both cases. And there would be ample room for the author's advance notice, crowned with his portrait, too.

He laughed aloud and allowed himself to slip back in his comfortable leather chair.

A few hours passed. The day's work was at an end. The workmen began to depart; one after another. Once more he reviewed the press room. The engines stood motionless. Strips of mud-soiled paper ornamented the floor in an ugly confusion. In boxes, such as by their appearance, might be useful for baking pans, were there stretched before him the silent sentinels for tomorrow's issue of his paper. His eyes wandered over the rows of type, set ready for action. How harmless they looked; how innocent, in their silent resting places! And yet, what terrible messengers they could be, of hatred and slander; of hope and of despair!

His fingers stopped for a moment. There! there were the plates of the pictures; all three of them. Of the two election candidates and of the

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author. Every one of them crowning his individual promise to the public with his own portrait.

Assured with himself as to his action, it was but a moment's work. Who would detect it?—Nobody! The proofs had been read and corrected. The machines would be set in motion; the papers would roll out in an endless chain; nicely folded. Busy hands would count, label and ship them. The newsboys would be there, all of them struggling in their turn for an allotted quota. The streets would be alive with their shouts: "All about the coming election! All about the forthcoming election! All, all!"

Nobody was likely to detect anything. And then, there would be the first intimation over the phone.

"Hello! hello! Is that the . . . . ?"

"Hello, there! Are you the . . . . ? The devil you are! Did you read to-night's issue of your paper? Hello, there! These are the Conservative party's committee rooms! Yes, yes—the Conservative. What have you done! Didn't you read our paper? Look at it now. What have you done?"

"Well, well! it's really too bad. . . . ."

Boyd checked himself in his reverie. He was resolved to do it. He would shoulder all the blame alone. Yes he would.

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After all, mistakes are there to be made; such things have happened before now, and would happen again. Nothing unusual. Simply a very much to be regretted mistake. . . . .

He lifted the cut of one of the candidate's picture, and the one of his friend, the author from their respective places and exchanged same with one another. There was no ruffle over the silver surface. It seemed exactly as before. He looked around. No watching eyes had seen him. He was all alone. . . . .

Drawing himself up, he buttoned his overcoat; pulled his slouch hat over his eyes, and left the machine room. . . . .

The next evening witnessed an explosion of laughter, fury and lamentations, such as never had been experienced before in the little mining town and district of O.

There, on the front page—as broad as daylight—the prospective author's picture glared at every reader, soliciting in the humble, well-known and usual way: "Your vote and influence at the polls is respectfully solicited, while ornamenting with his stern expression, the Conservative candidate headed the advance notice of the author's forthcoming book.

"Exitus acta probat!"

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The election candidate was furious and threatened reprisals, prosecution and claim for damages; but the author's name was now made and fully established.

And when his book in due time appeared on the shelves of the book-sellers, one edition after another began to disappear as if by magic.

"Say, Boyd!" the author asked his friend a few days after, when finding him in a moment of good humour; "say? That stunt, during the election campaign—did you pull that off?"

Boyd did not answer. He just smiled enigmatically. . . .











